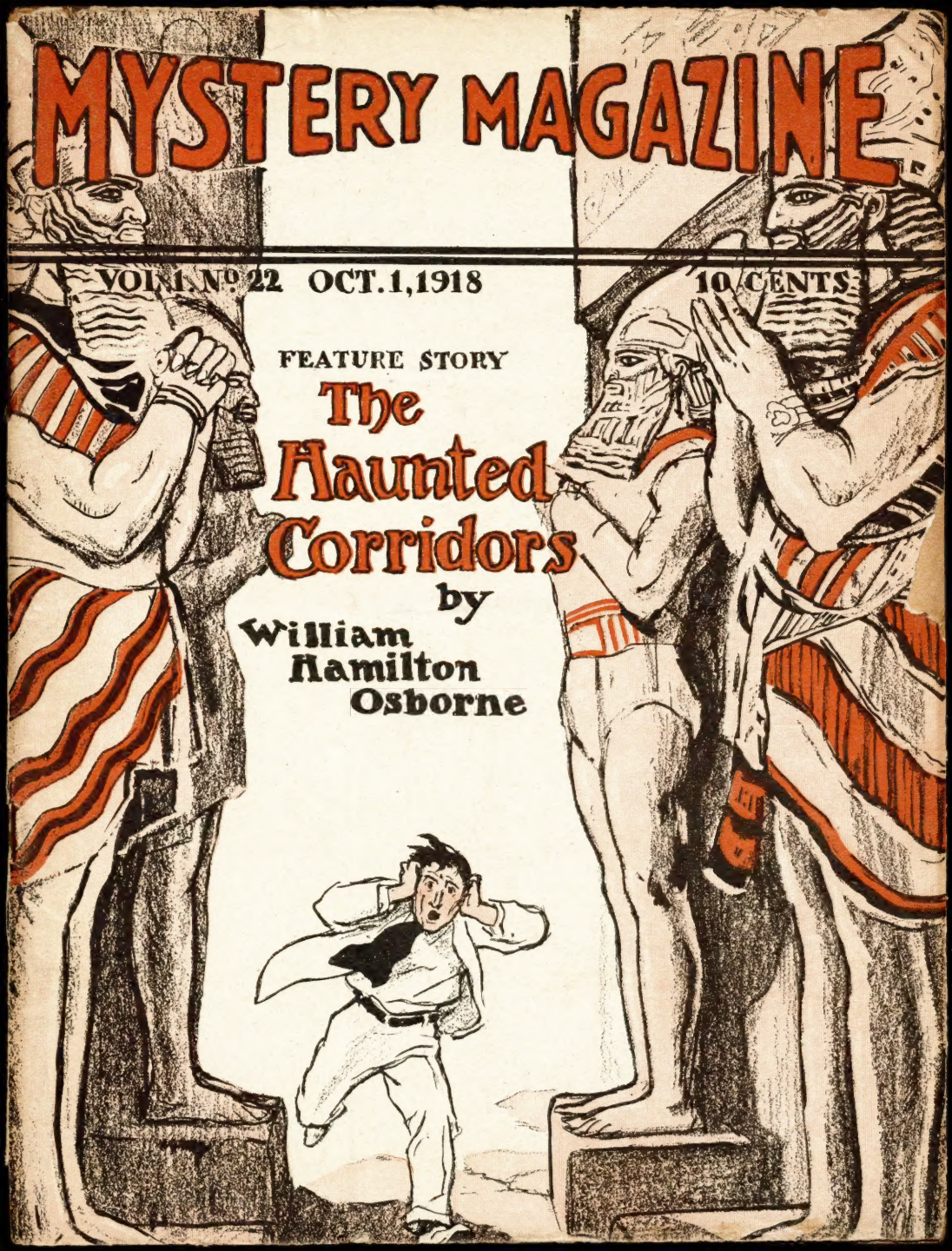


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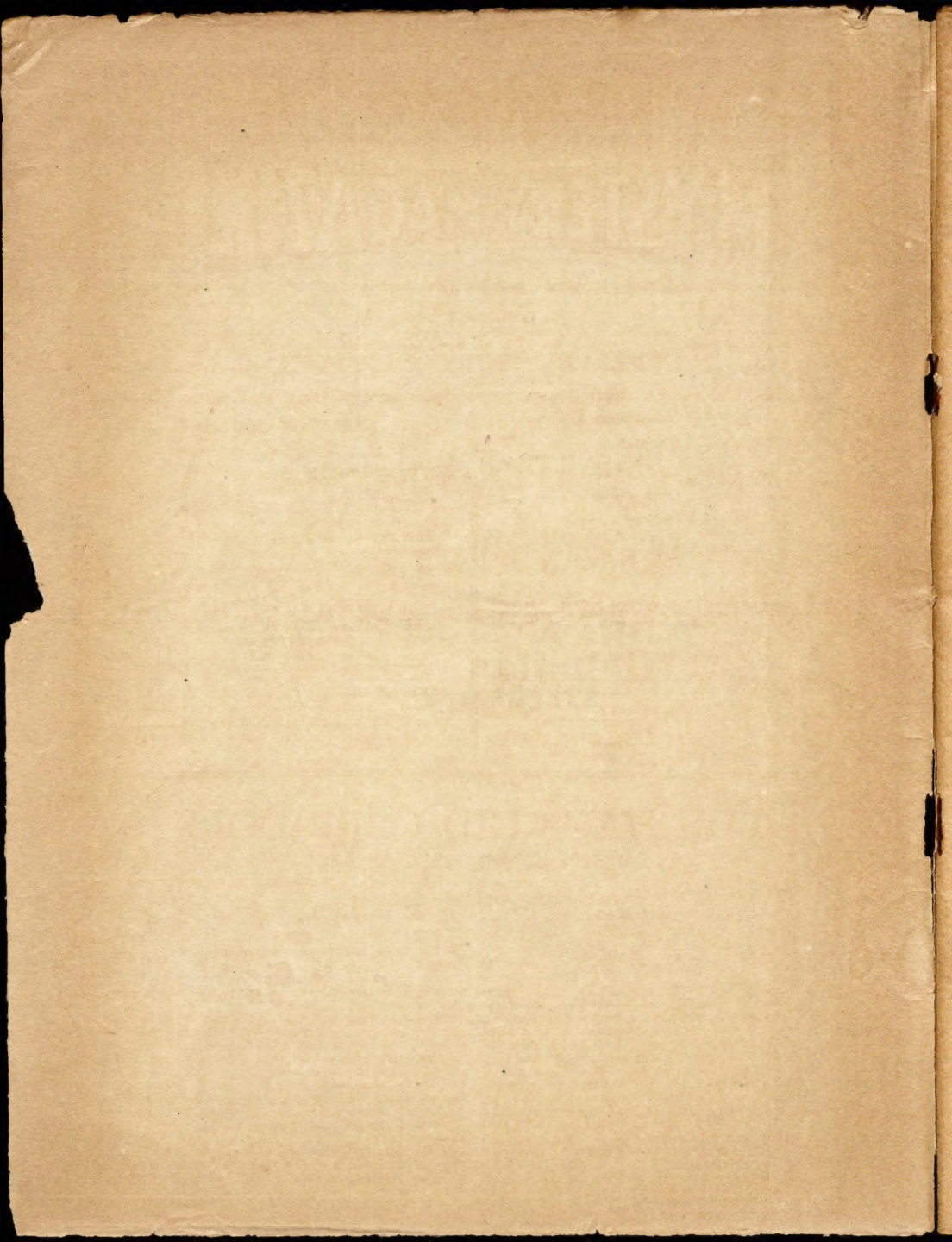
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FEATURE STORY

The Haunted Corridors

by

William
Hamilton
Osborne



"NO MAN'S MAN," a Story of Police and Politics, Coming in the October 15th Edition

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. I.

OCTOBER 1, 1918.

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THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS

A MYSTERY STORY BASED ON SCIENCE

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE,

Author of "The Red Mouse," "The Running Fight," "Mr. Bacheller's Apartments," etc.

PART ONE

GUM-SHOE MIXLEY—denizen of the dark, night watchman of the neighborhood—was in a quandary. True, he was not paid for watching the Le Massena Mansion, a huge, deserted chateau-like dwelling, that stood dark and forbidding in the midst of rank grass and overgrown shrubbery; and yet the ethics of his peculiar profession demanded that he treat the just and the unjust alike; in Mixley's lexicon the just being those who remunerated him, and the unjust those who did not.

Gum-shoe Mixley had often solicited the patronage of the old Le Massena Mansion, but quite without result. For years it had lain wholly unoccupied, shabby and unkempt by day and dark as Egypt at night.

But for three nights running Gum-shoe Mixley had been puzzled—puzzled by the dim light and the furtive shadows

in the huge cupola that surmounted the Le Massena house.

It was hinted by the unjust in the neighborhood that Gum-shoe Mixley, night watchman, was not always puzzled by stealthy figures and moving lights. Gum-shoe's enemies had suggested that the houses of the unjust had been broken into, on occasion, as a warning to those residents of the neighborhood who did not regard the services of Mixley sufficiently enough to pay for them. But these lights in the big house were lights unknown to Mixley, and all the more because he had seen no one enter and no one go away. Mixley felt, however, that he ought to investigate; investigation, on his part, might lead to remuneration on the part of the old dowager who owned the deserted dwelling. On the other hand, as Mixley told himself, the duty of a night watchman is to watch, not to engage in pugilistic or more serious encounters with burglars or other breakers of the law. He was paid to watch, and

he was not paid—so he told himself—to shoot; and his stipend certainly had never warranted the risk of being shot at.

Mixley revolved these things in his mind as he passed the big place for the sixth time that night. Under a street light he paused and consulted his timepiece. It was scarcely ten o'clock. With the anxiety of a Paul Revere, he glanced once more toward the cupola. No lights had yet appeared; no one had entered; no one had left.

As Mixley stood there, courting the lamp-post for its company, he heard the steady tramp-tramp of a ponderous personage coming down the street. He caught the gleam of buttons as the figure approached. He noted that the figure stopped for one instant at a corner and rapped once, twice, with a night-stick, and Gum-shoe Mixley sighed with relief.

"It's McMurtry on his rounds," said Mixley to himself. "I'll put it up to him."

He did put it up to McMurtry, and though it was apparent that McMurtry took but little interest in a dilapidated dwelling known to be empty, yet, at one juncture of Mixley's narrative, McMurtry sunk his muscular fingers into Mixley's arm.

"Sh-h!" said McMurtry, holding his night-stick rigidly aloft in his right arm, "there's them lights now."

"And the shadows," added Mixley. "Mac," he said with chattering teeth, for the night air was chill, "how did they get in? There's a high board fence runs around the place on three sides, and nobody gets in from the street side so far as I can tell. Maybe they live there, Mac."

McMurtry thrust his right hand into his hip-pocket, drew forth his gun, took a firm grip on his night-stick and then nodded vigorously.

"We'll investigate and see, my boy," he said, in a gruff whisper.

He stepped over the low hedge that skirted the sidewalk, nimbly crossed the unkept lawn, with Mixley at his heels, and quite as nimbly encircled the house, stopping with some surprise on the steps of the rear porch.

"This here door is open, my boy," he said. "Let's have a light."

Mixley drew forth his electric flash and step by step the two men ransacked the first and second floors.

"There's no fixtures gone," whispered McMurtry. "No lead pipe, neither."

He stood still and silent for an instant and Mixley could feel the sudden stiffening of McMurtry's nerve and muscle; that sharpening of every faculty that belongs to the real watch-dogs of the law by instinct.

McMurtry was paid to do something more than watch. "My boy," he whispered, "I hear them upstairs overhead. Whoever they are, I hear them."

They crept up softly and without the aid of light to the third floor. In the very center of this third floor was a winding staircase; apparently above this winding staircase was the cupola, and from the cupola unquestionably there came sounds; sounds of a weird, uncanny nature.

"It's c-c-cold," whispered Mixley, clutching the blue coat-tails of his stalwart friend.

His stalwart friend did not answer the remark, but uttered an exclamation more forcible than elegant, for in the darkness on the narrow stairway he had jammed his helmet forcibly against a door.

"Locked, by thunder!" he exclaimed. "And a sheet-iron door at that."

"Ah," whispered Mixley in return, "that there cupola was made to be sound-proof, so I've heard."

"It may be sound-proof," returned McMurtry, in more of a growl than a whisper, "but we ain't sound-proof—do you hear that, now?"

That was a long, weird wail, a sound that seemed not of any living human voice, something like the sudden snap of a string upon a drumhead. Three times was this sound repeated and then it was followed by the confused murmur of voices—now low, now somewhat shrill. Then as the two men stood without the sheet-iron door with bated breath, there rang out into the stillness of the night the sudden bark of a revolver.

McMurtry waited no longer. He raised his night-stick and struck it heavily against the sheet-iron door.

"Come out or I will break in," he yelled at the top of his voice. Then backing down two steps he stood and waited with his gun trained upon the door.

Mixley and his burly friend were quite right—there were not only lights and shadows in the cupola; there were men—two men.

These men, an hour before, had walked side by side along the railroad track. They had come from the eastern end of town; they had walked swiftly and in silence.

The Le Massena Mansion backed up on the rear of the P. R. & Q. branch, and at the Le Massena Mansion these two men left the track, charged side by side down into the narrow gully and on the other side had scrambled up toward the high board fence that surrounded the Le Massena grounds.

One of the men—the elder—uttered a short grunt and shook his head at the fence.

"No thoroughfare," he said.

"Yes," returned the younger of the two.

"You mean—climb," grunted the older man again.

"I mean—this," returned the younger man; stealthily he felt along the bottom of the fence until he found what he sought, the loose board by which he had made his entrance two nights last past. He thrust his companion through this opening and immediately followed. Then once more, side by side, they strode through the rank grass and the nettles toward the house.

"Might just as well have come around by the street," grunted the elder man.

"Not a bit of it," replied the younger with conviction, "a secret is a secret until somebody finds it out, and nobody is going to find this out until the hour strikes, Garthwaite." He tapped his friend on the shoulder. "There are only three people in the world that know about this thing; you're one and I'm another."

He stopped short, took out a large key and opened the kitchen door.

"And who is the third?" asked his companion, stumbling into the darkness after him.

"The third," returned the younger man, in a low voice, "happens to be Virginia."

"Virginia who?" said the elder man, astonished.

"Virginia Garthwaite," replied the younger.

The elder man whistled in surprise. "You don't say so," he exclaimed.

The young man drew him forward in the darkness. A moment later they were standing behind locked doors in the sound-proof cupola. The younger of the two men struck a match and lit a large oil lamp standing on a table in the center of the room. For the first time the features of these two men became visible.

The younger of the two was the taller of the two. He was slender, but with a great breadth of shoulder that indicated possibly extraordinary strength. He might have been thirty, but he looked thirty-five. Smooth-shaven though he were, his countenance was swarthy and his square jaw gave evidence of a tendency to heavy beard. He was handsome in a way and his swarthy face was surmounted by a heavy mass of coal-black hair that fell down carelessly over his forehead. There was something essentially un-American, possibly uncivilized about him; he seemed, somehow, of the Orient. His name was Paul Champenois. He was a professor of physics at the little University of Ougheltee, whose lights twinkled somberly and soberly in the distance, and he was known to be an expert in Egyptology and archeology, as well.

"It's a little stuffy in here, Garthwaite," said Paul Champenois, raising the four double window sashes on each side of the square cupola, "and besides, we need fresh air in our enterprise. We need the avenues of air," he mused, as though speaking to himself, "the avenues of air."

He seized a pair of night glasses that lay beside the lamp, drew his elderly friend to the western window and thrust the binoculars into his hand.

"Garthwaite," he went on, "do you see that pin point of light that twinkles on the hillside over there?"

Garthwaite did and said so.

"That," went on Champenois, "is the light in a cupola, the cupola in your house."

"You don't say so," ejaculated Garthwaite.

"Two houses on a hill," went on Champenois. "I needed two, yours was one and this the other. Adjust those Audemairs and glance as the crow flies along the avenues of air, and tell me what you see."

"Why, bless my soul," said Garthwaite. "I see lights and shadows; I see Virginia, hanged if I don't."

"Possibly," said Champenois, "she sees you, too."

Garthwaite stared for an instant longer through the glasses, then turned back toward the middle of the room and sank into a chair. "Why have you brought me here, Champenois?" he said.

He was a thick-set man, was Garthwaite, with a pointed beard into which the gray already had begun to creep. He had pleasant eyes and a somewhat whimsical manner. He constantly regarded Champenois with an air of uncertainty, and this air of uncertainty was somehow deepened on this particular occasion, either by reason of the fitful glow of the kerosene lamp that deepened the shadows in the face of Champenois, or else by reason of the silence of the night and the mystery which apparently surrounded the proceedings.

"Gad," said Garthwaite, moving uneasily in his chair and staring at Champenois, "I don't see what Virginia sees in you; I'm afraid of you at times. It's a wonder to me that you're not a mystery to her."

Champenois flashed a frank smile of understanding toward Virginia's father.

"Virginia likes me," he returned, showing his white teeth, "because she is like me. You could never understand in a hundred years, Garthwaite, but your daughter is like me and I am like her."

"Gad, I believe you're right," replied his friend. "Hang it, but sometimes I think that you even look like her." Champenois started. "Have you noticed that, too?" he queried. He leaned over the other man, placing one hand upon his shoulder. "Tell me," he went on, "what you mean by that; feature for feature, eye for eye, how do we look alike?"

Garthwaite rose and drew the other man into the full glare of the lamp.

"By heavens," he returned, "you don't look like her, either. She's dark and you are dark, and there it ends."

"Are you quite sure?" asked Champenois.

Garthwaite slowly shook his head. "There's just one thing that stamps you both," he answered, "and I can't name it. It may be the olive of your skin; it may be—"

He paused uncertainly.

"It may be," said Champenois, "a dash of the Southern sun, or, what is more likely, the tint of the Eastern sky. Let me name it for you, Garthwaite—Oriental—is that the word?"

"Gad," breathed Garthwaite, "that's the very word; you've both got it and I wonder where you got it, you and she."

Paul Champenois smiled and shook his head. "We've talked it over many times, friend Garthwaite," he exclaimed, "and she doesn't know and I do not know, but it is there and whatever thing it is, it has brought us together. Why am I here in Ougheltree; why did I follow blind trails, blindly leading me to a university, the name of which I had never even heard?"

"You wanted a job, I suppose," replied the matter-of-fact Garthwaite.

"Wait a bit," went on Champenois. "What brought you to the University of Ougheltree?"

"Blest if I know," said Garthwaite.

"I know," went on Champenois, "and I'm as certain of it as I am of the things I am going to tell you here to-night. The path of Virginia Garthwaite led, somehow, through the town of Ougheltree, therefore I came. That is all I know. My path had to cross hers at some time and at some place."

"Not a bit of it," returned Garthwaite briskly, "it didn't have to cross yours at all; it just happened to."

"You look at me," said Champenois, holding the other man's gaze steadily with his own eyes; "I tell you that the thing was as inexorable as fate."

Garthwaite looked at him steadily for an instant and as he looked he slightly shivered.

"Gad, but I believe you're right," he finally exclaimed.

He sank back into his chair and placed his hand over his eyes for an instant, trying to solve the mystery that was named Paul Champenois. Then withdrawing his hand he rose once more and shook himself.

"Well, go ahead with the game, Paul," he exclaimed.

"Why did you bring me here to-night?"

Champenois also shook from himself that strange involuntary air of mysticism that had for the instant settled down upon him, and striding to a corner of the room he plucked from an object there its covering of white, leaving the object fully revealed to view.

It was a strange object; constructed of glittering brass adorned with a multitude of levers and thumb screws and backed by an enormous dial marked off in sections so minute that they were indistinguishable by the naked eye. The dial appeared merely as a huge blur of dark gray against the dull wall paper of the room. But the distinguishing feature of the instrument was its multitude of hair-like fibers that stretched taut as harp strings between two arms of the machine.

Garthwaite glanced at it curiously. "What is it?" he demanded. Even as he spoke some slight tremor passed over the machine and a faint echo responded to his tones.

"Never mind what it is, friend Garthwaite," replied Champenois. "I brought you here to-night for just one purpose." He stretched his arm toward the western window. "Three miles away," he said, "on Chatham Hill, your daughter waits. You are going to talk to her to-night; talk to her just as you talk to me, over three miles of space."

Garthwaite smiled and jerked his hand toward another corner of the room. "And through a telephone," he said. "Not through a telephone," responded Champenois, "and not by wireless. You are going to talk by means of the Champenois Autoauraphone, and there it stands before you."

"All right," said Garthwaite, "get a move on and I'll talk; I'll talk over three miles or over thirty miles; I'll do anything you say; just start the thing in motion."

But the young doctor of science was not ready yet to start the thing in motion. He had a point to make, and he proceeded to make it.

"Garthwaite," he said, "do you know how fast a sound travels?"

"Oh, lord!" groaned Garthwaite, sinking back into his chair and drawing a yellow-covered novel from his pocket, "you're talking science, and if there's anything on the face of this earth that I won't stand for, my dear Paul, it's science." He held up his hand as though to command silence. "Hark," he said suddenly, "sounds to me like footsteps on the stairs."

"Exactly," responded Paul Champenois, "and yet it is a matter of notoriety that this cupola is sound-proof. Possibly there is some one on the stairs; and all the ingenuity of man can't keep that sound from creeping in to us. The point I want to make, Garthwaite, is that sound never stops."

Garthwaite again held up his hand and listened. "Well," he said, "that sound has stopped, at any rate."

Champenois shot out his forefinger toward his friend. "Put your hand on that end of the table—quick!" he exclaimed.

Garthwaite did so and Champenois immediately tapped the other end with a resounding whack.

"You felt that blow at your end, didn't you?" he asked.

"Of course," said Garthwaite.

"If the table had been sixty feet instead of six you would have felt that blow, if your sense of feeling had been sufficiently acute; and if the table had been six hun-

dred feet instead of sixty, it would have communicated the blow from one end to the other. Force never stops; sound never ceases. How far do you think your daughter's voice, Virginia's, can be heard?"

"H-hum," replied Garthwaite, a bit wearily, "all over the house at times."

"You rear," went on Champenois, "can hear her voice possibly one hundred and fifty yards away, say five hundred feet; your ear can hear a cannon shot eighteen miles away; the sound of her voice and the sound of the cannon travel at about the same rate, one thousand feet a second. It would take the sound of the cannon two minutes to reach you twenty miles away; if it travels two minutes to reach you, why can it not travel five minutes to reach something more sensitive than your ear. Why can't it travel a half-hour or an hour?"

Garthwaite yawned. "It can if it likes, Paul," he said, delving into the middle of his yellow-backed book. "Go on, talk away, and don't mind me. When you're through talking let me know."

Champenois smiled. "What have you got there, Garthwaite?" he queried.

Garthwaite held the book in air. "Perfectly astounding proposition, Paul," he said, "best thing I've ever read. Story of a chap—extremely ambitious, too, always climbing up in the world and at every step marrying a new wife to fit his altered position in society. He altered his position about three times a year; took a new wife every time."

"What became of the old one?" queried Paul, picking up a tuning fork from the table and taking from his pocket a small, hammerless revolver.

"Gad," went on Garthwaite, "this fellow was a scientist in his way, too; always wanted to own an automobile; started in by building a garage; wonderful garage, very heavy, broad and deep concrete foundation; built it himself; took an infernally long while to get the foundation laid. About three times a year he would take a new splurge and add another layer, and here was the joke; the public didn't know it and I didn't know it either until just now, but under every layer of that foundation was one of his wives. One of them was a very large lady and caused a slight bulge in one of the walls. Foxy Fixem, the detective."

"Foxy Fixem," mused Champenois, glancing at his friend severely, "and what is the name of this powerful work of fiction?"

An eager glow appeared in the eyes of Garthwaite. "The Murdstone Murders," he returned gleefully.

"Ah," returned Champenois. "And the author?"

"Clarence V. Gabbage," returned Garthwaite, unctuously.

"Never heard of him," retorted Champenois.

"Nor I either," replied Garthwaite. "I never found his name in any work on literature, but you don't know what a hold Gabbage has on the people of this country; he's the king of railroad and news-stand novels. Talk about Thackeray, Dickens, Balzac—"

Champenois held up his hands in despair. "No wonder you sidestep science," he exclaimed. "Do you mean to tell me that you, occupying the chair of literature and languages in Ougheltree, have got the nerve—"

"Oh, not at all," replied Garthwaite, "not at all. Officially, I am for Meredith, but privately I hate him to beat the band. Meredith never did anything like Gabbage, mark my words."

"He must have wanted to," said Champenois, sarcastically, as the matter-of-fact Garthwaite plunged once more into the mysteries of the yellow back.

Champenois seized the book and tossed it out of the window. "My dear professor," he said, "if you won't listen, then look."

Ranged in a row upon a little shelf above their heads were a number of lamp chimneys. The scientist tapped the table smartly with a tuning fork. Immediately one lamp chimney, and only one out of the dozen, commenced to sing its shrill, weird, vibrant response. The tuning

fork had touched the soul of that cylinder to the quick. It made it cry aloud as though in agony.

Champenois seized another tuning fork and set that into vibration, whereupon the third lamp chimney in the row leaped inconveniently into life, trembling from top to bottom, singing its song a bit more weird, a bit shriller than the other.

Garthwaite looked on wonderingly. Champenois jerked his head toward the cylinder.

"Garthwaite," he said, "that is nothing but the principle of wireless telegraphy; something at this end of space sets in motion one set of vibrations and something at the other end, miles and miles away, catches those vibrations up. Listen, now, to this."

He thrust into the air his hammerless revolver and pulled the trigger. The noise made by the gun died away almost immediately, but in the corner of the room a huge gong took up the sound and kept beating and beating it back into their ears, answering the gun with what seemed a thousand metal tongues.

"Garthwaite," said Champenois at length, "I'm not talking wireless to you, I'm going way beyond anything like that. Give me a tuning fork big enough and a lamp chimney delicate enough, and I'll make the other respond to the other without wireless—not by means of clock, or flash, or code—but directly through the avenue of air, just as I shall make your daughter talk to you—just as you will hear your daughter's voice—across three miles of space to-night."

They were interrupted by crash upon crash. Champenois stood at attention and Garthwaite leaped to his feet. Garthwaite had a twinkle in his eye.

"It's your sheet-iron door taking up those tuning-fork vibrations, Paul," he said. "I think you have proved your point."

Champenois, without answering, descended the spiral staircase, unlocked the door and threw it open. He looked into the muzzle of McMurtry's gun.

McMurtry, without a moment's hesitation, swarmed up the narrow stairs, carrying Champenois with him and Mixley behind him.

Once inside the cupola McMurtry glanced about him with suspicious eyes.

"Aha!" he said, placing his strong hand upon Champenois's shoulder, "counterfeiters' den, I shouldn't be surprised."

But Mixley was surprised. He stared at him for a moment and then swooped down upon Garthwaite.

"Well, Professor Garthwaite!" he exclaimed, "and what are you doing here?"

He looked from Garthwaite, whom he did know, to Champenois, whom he did not know.

Garthwaite nodded absently. "I'm guilty, Mixley," he conceded; "I confess; I'm *particeps criminis*; I'm an accessory before the fact."

"To what?" exclaimed McMurtry. Then McMurtry's face broadened into a grin. "Ah, professor," he exclaimed, holding out his hand, "and what devilry are you up to now?"

Garthwaite spread his hands with a hopeless gesture and bowed to Champenois. "Ask Doc Champenois," he returned, "he knows and I don't; but whatever it is, we are in it together. If you've got two pairs of handcuffs, take us both."

McMurtry looked toward the instrument in the corner, strode to it and inspected it.

"It's no counterfeiting machine, anyhow," he said, still with the grin upon his face.

Garthwaite yawned. "Boys," he said, "if you can stand the strain, Doc Champenois will tell you all about it, and while he's telling you, I'll go and have a little smoke."

Whereupon at his first movement toward the door Champenois seized him by his shoulders and thrust him back into his chair, bowed low to the two minions of the law, saw them safely down the spiral stairs and out of sight, swung-to the door and then came back to Garthwaite.

"Professor Garthwaite," he said, "will you get your daughter on the telephone?"

Garthwaite called up his house and got Virginia on the wire. He found, to his surprise, that Champenois had installed a branch telephone in the Garthwaite cupola, three miles away, and Virginia answered therefore from the top of the house.

"Virginia," said her father over the wire, "what have you got there besides a telephone?"

"The Champenois Autoauraphone," responded his daughter.

"Virginia," he went on earnestly, "does it resemble a sounding-board hitched up to a weaving loom; is that the kind of a thing you've got?"

Virginia said she had, and she was ready and most anxious to make the first experiment.

"Where is Paul Champenois?" she asked.

Champenois was at the instrument. "Tell Virginia," commanded Champenois, "to turn screw number one to point C, and to pull the third lever on the upright."

Garthwaite gave the instructions over the wire and hung up the receiver and went back to his seat in the middle of the room.

"Now," said Champenois, "listen, and inside of two minutes you will hear your daughter's voice, because the sound of your daughter's voice never stops. It may grow too faint for the human ear, but it can never be too faint for this autoauraphone. Her voice goes on forever." He held up his hand. "Silence!" he commanded.

They were silent for a full moment; so was the autoauraphone; no sound was wafted to them across that three miles of space. The night was as still as death.

"I hear nothing," said Garthwaite, in a whisper.

"There's something wrong," exclaimed Champenois.

He stepped to the telephone and called up Garthwaite's house again.

Virginia answered. "I spoke," said Virginia, enthusiastically; "could you hear my voice?"

"No," said Champenois; "what did you say?"

"I said," she responded, "the sound of my voice never stops; you are hearing it three miles away."

"You said that?" demanded Champenois.

"Yes," she responded.

"You didn't hear my voice?" he asked.

"No," said Virginia.

"You spoke directly into the concentrator cone?"

"Yes," she said. "And you heard me?"

"No," said Champenois, "there's something wrong. Hang up the receiver, go back to the machine and talk, read, anything, but keep it up."

Again they listened and again the instrument was as silent as the night itself.

Champenois' face flushed, his brow clouded, but his fingers were very busy. He kept pushing up one lever and pulling down another; tightening one set of fibers and loosening another set, scanning the face of the dial with

a magnifying lens, and then suddenly, as Garthwaite sat there, the room seemed filled with sound. The walls reverberated, the house seemed to shake as with the roar of a distant cannon.

Garthwaite sat rigidly in his chair gripping the seat with both hands. "My heavens, man," he cried, "what was that?"

Champenois swiftly jerked the lever and there was silence. He stood up, his face pale, and wiped his brow with his kerchief.

"I don't know," he said at length, in faltering tones, "what it was. It was not a sound, it was sounds, a multitude of sounds—sounds here, there, everywhere."

He stood rigid, silent, for a moment, thinking hard. "I could not hear her voice at all," he mused. "She is speaking now, and yet I can't hear her voice. What did I hear?"

A new, strange light came into his eyes and he flung himself feverishly into his stool at the instrument and once more adjusted it in accordance with some new idea that had suddenly smitten him. Then he turned to Garthwaite.

"What do you hear now?" he asked breathlessly.

Garthwaite listened. "I hear a railroad train coming down rapidly from the West; the Cannon-Ball Express."

Champenois' lips tightened over his teeth. "Look to the west—out of the window," he commanded. "You can see up the tracks for a good two miles. Do you see a train; do you see the headlight of a train?"

"No," answered Garthwaite, "I see nothing, but it's coming like

wildfire, Champenois, louder and louder—" He stopped. "Wait a bit," he went on, "I hear another from the east."

"Look to the east," said Champenois.

"I see nothing," replied Garthwaite, "but I hear—"

"You say," said Champenois, his voice hoarse with excitement, "you hear one train from the west and one from the east."

"Don't you?" demanded Garthwaite.

"Yes," said Champenois.

They both stood there, one glancing to the east and one to the west. The sound grew loud and louder still; it shook the building.

"Why," gasped Garthwaite, "they're here; they're on the tracks outside; they're passing. No, they're not." He fell back, his eyes starting from their sockets. "My heavens, man!" he cried, "what is that, and that, and that?"

Above the steady roar of the trains there was a resounding crash, a terrific impact; the sound of splintering wood; the crunching of heavy masses of steel; a report like the crack of doom, and then—silence.

Garthwaite looked at Champenois and Champenois looked at Garthwaite.



Like some huge rat, he turned and scuttled down the narrow, winding stairway.

"It was a collision, a head-on collision," exclaimed Garthwaite weakly. "They have smashed—crashed. Great heavens, man—"

But Champenois was at his side gripping his wrist with a grip of iron, his glowing eyes eating into Garthwaite's like fire.

"Garthwaite," he cried, in a hoarse whisper, "tell me, was there ever a collision on this road, a big collision like that we have just heard?"

"Yes," replied Garthwaite, "I should think there was, and twenty people killed."

Champenois' muscular fingers tightened their hold. "When did it happen?" he demanded.

Garthwaite thought for an instant. "Some time in the year 1898," he finally replied.

The scientist stiffened as with sudden shock, then he leaped back to the machine and threw off the lever he had opened.

He stood there looking not at Garthwaite, but at the machine, drinking in its mystery, its possibilities. In some sort of bewilderment he pressed both hands against his temples.

"Garthwaite," he finally exclaimed, in a hoarse whisper, "do you know what this thing means—do you see where it is leading us to?"

Garthwaite shook his head. "I know a phonograph when I see it, Champenois," he answered, "and I know a phonograph when I hear it, if that is what you mean."

Champenois frowned. "You don't understand, after all," he said. He stepped to the telephone and once more called up Virginia Garthwaite.

Virginia was seemingly in despair. "I thought you would never call me up, Paul," she said; "I've been so impatient. It must have been perfect—perfect."

"How perfect?" queried Champenois.

"You've been so long," she answered, "that I knew it must have worked right this time. I spoke very distinctly."

"Great Scott!" murmured Champenois contritely, "you don't mean to say you've been talking into your machine all this time."

"Talking and reading," said the girl. Garthwaite leisurely approached the telephone. "What does she say?" he asked Champenois.

"She's been talking and reading to us all the time," said Champenois.

The girl heard him over the telephone. "I've been reading Meredith into the machine, Paul," she laughed. "I thought you would like that best."

Champenois passed the information on. "She's been reading Meredith to the machine, Garthwaite," he explained.

Garthwaite held up his hands in holy horror. "No wonder the blamed thing wouldn't respond," he grunted. "Now, if she had tried Gabbage, I'm quite sure—"

But Champenois was talking earnestly into the telephone. "Virginia," he said, "the machine has gone farther than I hoped. Follow my directions, now, and I promise you results that you will hear yourself. Use the lens—do you understand? Pull lever number seven, thrust up the aggravator and turn the dial screw to M. 364. You understand?"

"Yes," replied the girl. "When you get results," said Champenois, "please call us up at once."

He hung up the receiver and seated himself in a chair near the telephone, gripping the arms of the chair tightly in his impatience.

"Great note," Garthwaite kept repeating, "to read Meredith to that machine; if you hadn't chucked my Gabbage out of the window, now—"

As if in answer to his suggestion a stealthy footstep sounded on the winding staircase and a slinking figure crept into the room. It was Mixley, night watchman, and in his hand he held a yellow-covered book. Mixley's teeth still chattered.

"F-f-found this on the lawn," shuddered Mixley; "saw

it drop; thought you would need it and I've brought it back."

Professor Garthwaite pounced upon it. "You're a hero, Mixley!" he exclaimed.

Mixley bowed and waited politely for the cigar that Garthwaite drew forth from his waistcoat.

"Blamed ghostly house this, gents," said Mixley, lighting the cigar for company before he started off, and then starting reluctantly down the dark, narrow staircase.

"Mixley," cried Champenois.

Mixley turned. "Oh," continued Champenois, "I wish you would stay here just a minute; I want to ask a question."

"Fire ahead," said Mixley.

But the scientist did not fire ahead just then, for the telephone bell rang with unusual violence. Champenois' eyes lighted up and he answered it at once.

"You heard—" he began. And then he stopped, for the voice of Virginia—strained and unusually excited—came impetuously over the wire.

"I heard," she exclaimed, "and I am hearing now."

"What?" demanded Champenois.

"Cheers," cried the girl, "cheers upon cheers. I hear the hum of excited voices, and once—only once—the shrill notes of a fife."

"And that is all?" asked Champenois.

"All," replied the girl, "except one thing; I heard a woman's voice in the midst of it all cry out 'There he goes!' and then more cheers—"

"Wait a minute," exclaimed Champenois, "I want you to tell that to your father."

Garthwaite took up the receiver and listened to the recital of his daughter. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Some devilry out upon the campus, I suppose," he said.

Champenois only smiled. "We are nearer to the campus than Virginia," he returned, "and we heard no cheers, no shouts. Have you heard any, Mixley?"

"No, sir," responded Mixley, "I have not."

"Paul," came the insistent voice of Virginia over the wire, "will you tell me what it means? The night is as silent as the grave. Where do the voices come from? Tell me, please."

"I'll tell you later," responded Champenois. "You may shut off your lever. But you are quite sure you heard nothing but cheers?"

"Except the fife," responded the girl. "Yes," went on Champenois, "but you heard no drum, no tramping of feet?"

"No," she answered, wondering; "why do you ask?"

"You'll know everything to-night," replied the scientist. He turned back to Garthwaite and repeated all that Garthwaite's daughter had just told him. Then he turned to Mixley.

"Mixley," he said, "how long have you lived in Oughel-tree?"

"All my life," said Mixley.

"You remember when this house was built?"

Mixley scratched his head, searched the confines of his memory for the space of half a minute, and then nodded with certainty, vouchsafing the information that the Le Massena Mansion was erected in the fall of such-and-such a year.

Champenois turned now to his machine and busied himself there for an instant, adjusting the dial hand once more with his lens. No sooner had he pulled the lever than there leaped forth into the room a most tremendous racket.

Mixley looked behind him; his face turned white. He leaped forward.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed.

"What do you hear, Mixley?" exclaimed Champenois.

"Gosh!" repeated Mixley, "hear about twenty men pulling down this house."

"You hear the sound of hammers?" queried Champenois.

Mixley nodded.

"I hear a saw," said Garthwaite.

Mixley shuddered. "I wish McMurtry was here," he

said, looking fearfully down the winding staircase, "or, I suppose if you gents would lend a hand—you've got a gun—it must be the lead pipe that they're tearing out."

Champenois smiled grimly. "It isn't the tearing out of lead pipe you hear, Mixley," he remarked, "and it isn't the tearing down of a house; it's the building of a house you hear."

Mixley strode to the window and glanced out into the night. "What house?" he demanded. "There ain't no house around here getting built."

"You hear," went on Champenois, "the building of this house. Do you understand?"

For answer Mixley cast one scared glance at Garthwaite, a second at Champenois and a third toward the machine; then, like some huge rat, he turned and scuttled down the narrow, winding stairway.

Once more the scientist shut off the machine. "Now do you understand?" asked Champenois.

"I understand nothing," replied Garthwaite.

"I'll tell you, then," said the scientist. "This machine has done to-night what in my wildest dreams I never expected it to do. It has failed to do the simple thing that I was sure it could accomplish, but I'll say this for it—it has done the thing I built it for. Garthwaite, he went on, 'I told you that sound never stops; that is axiomatic, practically; being axiomatic, it is then only a question of mathematical accuracy to get an ear that will hear the sound, no matter how faint it has grown with time. I have merely built an artificial ear—an ear too delicate to hear the sounds of the present; too delicate to hear your daughter's voice, to-night, across three miles of space, but delicate enough to catch up and repeat the sounds of the years that are past and gone. Now listen once again.'

Once again he did something to the machine and there burst forth upon the two men that tremendous discord, that medley of noises that they had heard at first, now loud, now faint, but always bewildering. Then he shut it off.

"Now what was that?" asked Garthwaite.

"That," replied the scientist, "was a sound made up of all the noises—think of it, Garthwaite—of all the noises of all time. If the machine did naught but that, it would be absolutely useless; not one sound could be distinguished from another. The machine distinguishes; it picks out the given sounds of a given time. You just heard, with Mixley, the carpenters of over a quarter of a century ago—you heard blow upon blow of hammers. Before that you heard a railroad wreck of a dozen years gone by, and Virginia heard—"

"What did she hear?" demanded Garthwaite, sitting forward, his hands on his knees, listening now intently.

"She, too, heard the noises of a dozen years ago; she heard three companies from the University of Oughthee marching to the Spanish War."

"She heard no tramp of feet," said Garthwaite. "She heard voices; we heard none."

"Ah," commented Champenois, "you have hit the nail—or one of the nails—squarely on the head. You told me a few moments ago that twenty people were killed in that wreck. Did we hear their voices as we stood here listening?"

"No," replied Garthwaite, in a half-whisper. "I wonder why?"

"Wait a minute," exclaimed the scientist. Once more he adjusted his machine; once more it sounded forth, but this time there was no crash of metal against metal, no sound of splintering wood. Instead the machine uttered something that brought both men up all standing—a wail, the sound of moans, a groan of unutterable anguish.

Champenois, with his hand to his head, swung the lever back. He paced up and down the room for a moment before he spoke.

"I can't stand that, Garthwaite," he exclaimed. "I can't stand the sound of people—any one—in pain, suffering. My mother died in agony. Since then I have—"

He broke off and stood silent for a moment, and then shook some memory from him. "Suffering like that seems

to make me mad," he said at last in his own even tones. "But never mind; the machine has made its point; it's all a question of pitch."

"Pitch?" echoed Garthwaite.

"Yes," responded Paul, "and yet I am wrong; it's a question of time, also, as you have seen. We must pick out our time, otherwise we get the sounds of all time. We must adjust the pitch to the kind of sound we want to hear. If it were not for that the sound of voices of a given day would be drowned by all the other sounds. Virginia heard the voices; she didn't hear the tramp, tramp; she didn't hear the drums; she heard the fife, because it resembles a shrill human voice. You and I heard no crash an instant just gone by, but mingled with the groans of the dying we heard the hiss of steam, sibilant like a voice. Now, do you understand?"

"I hear what you say," responded Garthwaite. "I think I understand what you say, and I see what you have done."

Champenois looked him squarely in the face. As Champenois looked upon his elder, there came into the latter's eyes that peculiar expression of fear that he had mentioned earlier in the evening.

"Well," said Champenois at length, "what do you think of it?"

Garthwaite shook himself. He averted his glance from Champenois and from the machine. Then he strode to the west window and looked out into the night. He drew himself together—seemed to be thinking hard; actually he was trying to release himself from some kind of a fancied spell that it seemed to him Paul Champenois and the machine had cast upon him. He turned almost fiercely upon his friend.

"I don't believe it!" he cried belligerently.

"You don't believe it?" gasped Champenois, aghast.

"No," blurted out Garthwaite; "I can't believe it; it passes human understanding. It's—it's a fake."

"A fake," repeated Champenois, an amused smile playing around his firm mouth. "Then I must be a fake."

Garthwaite shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know about that, Paul," he responded; "maybe you believe it yourself, but I don't. I think that your blamed machine is nothing but a phonograph. Maybe you don't know what it is, Paul; maybe the machine is fooling you, but that's all I can see in it. It has picked up impressions somewhere, has recorded them and repeats them. It may fool you, but it can't fool me."

Paul's eyes grew frightened for an instant. "Virginia will believe," he said.

"Well, let her believe, if she wants to," replied Garthwaite, "and you can believe, too, but leave me out."

Champenois folded his arms and glanced pleadingly at his friend. "Garthwaite," he said earnestly, "the time is coming when the whole world will believe, but I want you to believe now."

Garthwaite only shook his head. "You've got to show me," he said.

The young scientist was puzzled. He thought deeply for a moment and then he nodded with conviction.

"By George," he finally exclaimed, "I've got it. I'll show you and I'll make you believe, Garthwaite, in spite of yourself, in spite of everything."

It was three nights later. It was twelve o'clock at night. Garthwaite and his daughter Virginia sat in the tonneau of Paul Champenois' swift touring car. Paul Champenois was at the wheel tearing holes in the darkness, eating up long miles like fire. Beside him, in a huge leather case strapped to the seat, was the machine.

"Where are we bound for?" asked Virginia tremulously of her father.

"Search me," replied the matter-of-fact Garthwaite, "but I'm game if you are—game for anything."

"I'm game for anything that Paul suggests," responded Virginia.

Silently they sped on, always in the same direction. Finally, still in the silence of the night, they reached a huge city beside a river, crossed the river on an early

morning ferryboat and at two o'clock found themselves dashing through the side streets of the borough of Manhattan.

Twenty minutes later the car drew up at one side of a deserted square.

"This," said Champenois, "is our destination."

Garthwaite started from the car, but Champenois drew him back. "Stay where you are," he commanded. "Do you recognize this place?"

"Yes," said Virginia curiously, "it is Cooper Institute." Garthwaite peered through the mist that had settled down upon the city.

"Gad, so it is!" he exclaimed, "and why have you brought us here?"

"I'll show you in a minute," said Champenois, unstrapping his machine.

By this time the streets were practically deserted. A milk wagon rattled past them noisily; in the far distance they heard the rap of a policeman's night-stick upon the pavement; two drunken roisterers, groaning and mumbling with fatigue, passed them unsteadily and staggered into the dim distance. A woman came furtively out of a side street, looked uncertainly about her and crossed the square; stood for one instant spellbound as she caught sight of the touring car—the electric light above heightening the effect of her gaudy headgear and the rouge upon her face—and then, catching sight of Virginia, the woman passed hastily across the street into another narrow thoroughfare, her footfalls growing fainter as she went. Then there was silence.

"Now," said Champenois. With his electric flash he hastily adjusted his machine, swinging into place the concentrator cone, and with a rapidity that had come from long practice, he carefully fitted the *accelerator*, the *aggravator* with its *super-magnifier*, and finally the *reverberator*. Then he adjusted the dial screw with careful accuracy, and pulled the lever.

Out of the void immediately came the hum of voices. Virginia looked about her in alarm.

"I thought there were a million people about us!" she exclaimed in awestruck tones.

Her father said nothing. Suddenly the murmur became stilled and a voice, a single voice, a voice of tremendous power and sympathy, smote the silence. At the first words Garthwaite gripped the motor car.

"Listen!" he cried. They listened to the voice.

"... the great crime of having destroyed it ... will be upon us. That is cool ... a highwayman ... holds a pistol to my ear ... or I shall kill you ... and then you will be a murderer. To be sure what the robber demanded of me ..."

"I know that voice," exclaimed Garthwaite.

"Hush," said Champenois.

"Listen," cried Virginia. And again they were silent and the voice was going on—always going on.

"If slavery is right," said the voice, "all words, acts, laws and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away ... Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is ... but can we ... allow it to spread into ... and to overrun us here in these free states ..."

There was a pause. Again there was the murmur of many voices and right alongside of the car to Virginia's left, out of the gloom, a single rough phrase sprang into being and patched itself together, spoken in the voice of a single member of a clamoring mob.

"Mountebank!" yelled this voice.

It was followed by a laugh, and then from across the square another voice answered it as though by way of echo:

"The man-monkey. Down with him."

There were other murmurs, and then another hush.

"I heard those two," said Garthwaite suddenly. But Champenois was holding up his hand and the voice was going on.

"... neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to government or of dungeons to

ourselves ... let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Silence again. And then, suddenly, like the roar of an avalanche, a huge multitude of men burst into cheers. Garthwaite, himself, under some spell that had been cast upon him, rose in the motor car, hat in hand, and cheered with the invisible crowd.

"Gad, Virginia," he said, "I was here myself; I heard it all; I was a boy then. Did you hear that chap that called out 'Man-monkey' over there?"

"Yes," exclaimed Virginia.

"He got a clip behind the ear that night," went on Garthwaite, rubbing his knuckles; "he never knew who gave it to him, but I did. I was there, I tell you, at the time, and in this place—"

"The time," said Champenois solemnly, consulting his dial with his lens, "was February, 1860; the place was Cooper Institute, and the voice—"

Garthwaite removed his hat. "Abraham Lincoln's," he said. "I remember it; I would know it anywhere."

PART TWO

"THEN you believe?" asked Champenois, as they bowed along toward home with the dawn just breaking in the East.

"I hate to, but I do," admitted Garthwaite.

"You're quite sure, then," said Paul, "that my machine is not a phonograph—quite sure they didn't have phonographs in Lincoln's days, are you not, Professor Garthwaite?"

"Gad," said Garthwaite, "it looks that way; that certainly was his voice. 'Yes,' he finally conceded, 'I am willing to tell you that I believe. I'm for the autograph-telephone from now on, Paul.'"

"Ah, well," sighed Paul, "I knew you would come to it, but I missed that perfect faith in you that Virginia conceded to me. Virginia," he said, "do you see where this machine is going to lead us? We can go back, back, back to the beginning of time. We heard a railroad crash of a dozen years ago; we heard the building of a house back in the eighties; we have heard the voice of Lincoln more than half a century away. Virginia," he went on, his voice ringing with conviction, "people are reading history, but we shall know it; we shall do more than know it, we shall change it. We will know the truth; nothing shall be hidden from you and me. History may lie, but the voice of the past shall not; it will come down to us from the ages; we will go back, back—we will hear the voices of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; the sound of their voices has never stopped."

"Gad!" exclaimed Garthwaite, "I never thought of that. Let us hear them here and now."

They had pulled up before Garthwaite's silent house at the other end of Ougheltree and were getting out of the machine.

"I'm with you," said Champenois, pointing toward the cupola, "I'm with you here and now."

Virginia laid a hand upon his arm. "Have we any right," she faltered, "to know those things—to hear—"

Silently they ascended to the cupola and Virginia switched on the lights. It was a cozy, pleasant sort of a place, this cupola, but there was something intensely Oriental, or more properly Egyptian, about its furnishings. Virginia Garthwaite had fitted it up in her own way, according to her own tastes, and it was here, more than in any other place, that she seemed to fit in—she was part and parcel of the surroundings.

The glow in the eyes of Paul Champenois deepened as he looked upon her in the soft light. He was quite right, they were very much alike, these two—some air of mysticism surrounded both. Virginia, too, was tall and exceeding graceful, but full-throated and full-bosomed, and,

like Champenois, her every movement gave evidence of some supple strength.

"Paul," she breathed between her parted lips, as her own glance answered his, "you have been glorious—wonderfully glorious—to-night."

"As you *always* are," responded Champenois.

She sank upon a divan at one end of the little room and Champenois tore his eyes from her and strode to her machine, a counterpart of his.

"Garthwaite," he said solemnly, "you want to hear a voice from the ages, do you?"

"Yes," said Garthwaite, standing very rigid and turning suddenly quite pale.

"Not Adam's and Eve's," broke in Virginia in a startled voice. "Not that, Paul—nothing like that. I can't tell you how it feels to me—it's sacrilege."

Champenois paused. "There's one thing I have not said as yet," he remarked. "I've told you about time, I've told you about pitch, but I haven't told you why we had to go to Cooper Institute to hear the voice of Lincoln. Why couldn't we have heard it here?"

"To be sure," responded Garthwaite, "why couldn't we?"

"I'll tell you why," said Champenois. "In the first place, possibly we could, but it would have been faint and it would have been mathematically inaccurate. Lincoln's voice was attuned to the place wherein he spoke, just as our voices are to this room. There the surroundings were favorable for his voice to be heard on February 27th, 1860; his voice travels around and around the world, but as it comes back to Cooper Institute it falls once more into attune with the old surroundings; I could explain this to a mathematician—scientist—but you must take it from me as being absolutely true. If I were going to bring back the voice of Eve—or of the serpent—"

"Don't!" pleaded Virginia.

"I would go to the Garden of Eden—if I could find it—with my machine."

"I'll go with you," exclaimed Garthwaite, "blamed if I won't."

Champenois seized his lens and bent over the machine, swinging the dial hand far around the face.

"I'm all at sea, Garthwaite," he went on, "but I'm going to bring something to you now—some voice from the ages. Listen."

They listened. For a long time nothing was heard, then just a faint murmur, the fragment of a sound. Champenois bent low to hear it.

"I've got them," he exclaimed, "I'm sure I've got them." He piled on everything he had—concentrator cone, magnifiers, accelerators—everything. Then there was silence again and then another fragment of sound that grew and swelled as the seconds passed.

Champenois held up his hand. "Garthwaite," he cried, "you're a linguist, past and present. Listen. We've got Egypt on the wire."

Garthwaite listened, shaking his head as the apparently unintelligible sounds proceeded.

Virginia, listening, looked uncertainly from one man to the other. "Is it Egypt?" she queried of her father.

"Not sure," he answered, "but I think it is."

The volume of sound grew louder, swelling and swelling, until it seemed too large for the small apartment, then it ceased. Then there leaped out of the silence a single voice—a woman's voice—crying in agonized accents

"Cleopatra . . . tra . . ."

Again and again, while they stood there listening, it rang out, beating the name into their ears.

"Cleopatra—Cleopatra—Cleopatra."

Champenois staggered back against the wall, beads of sweat starting from his forehead.

"God!" he cried. "Virginia, that was *your* voice; yours, do you understand?"

Virginia started up and Garthwaite started forward. And again the machine beat that single word into their ears:

"Cleopatra."

Virginia sank back on the divan and covered her face with her hands. For an instant she sat there trembling,

silent. Then she looked up into the face of Champenois, her blood running cold—the color fleeing from her lips.

"Yes," she conceded hoarsely, "you are right, Paul, it is my voice."

Three months later the two men—Champenois and Garthwaite—sat on a small rounded balcony fronting their suite in the American hotel at Alexandria. They were smoking native Egyptian cigarettes. It was the middle of the long vacation. It was dusk.

"Well," sighed Garthwaite comfortably, "we've been going some."

Paul's eager eyes peered into the dusk. "Some," he replied, "but not enough—not enough."

Garthwaite leaned over and touched him lightly on the knees. "I'm afraid, Paul," he said, with a touch of regret in his voice, "that it will never be enough—for you."

He looked keenly into his companion's face. For weeks now that restless fever had burned in the eyes of Champenois. For weeks the lines had deepened in his countenance. Garthwaite was right, there could be no end to his desire for this peculiar kind of knowledge. Even in the short race across Europe, they had acquired strange and wonderful information. Sometimes surreptitiously and sometimes by permission they had wrested from the dark corners of locked and barred boudoirs secrets which would have changed the fate of nations. In England they had established, beyond all peradventure, that Queen Elizabeth—that austere, unmarried sovereign of Great Britain—had been a man and not a woman. On the continent, on the contrary, they had proven Charles Martel, the Hammer, to be an amazon. Here, there, everywhere, in France, Spain, Italy, they had picked up broken threads of private history that in time would set the world afire; and each man kept his private journal—all in cipher—of these remarkable events.

But it was toward Alexandria that Champenois had set his face, for ever in his ears there rang that cry, in the voice of Virginia:

"Cleopatra."

It was that, unknown to Garthwaite, that had sent the feverish blood pulsing through Paul's veins—had chiseled the deep lines in his face. Sometimes he doubted whether that voice had come from the East. So far—with the exception of that once in Ougheltee—he had been unable to patch the sound together out of the distance of the past. And yet that cry not only found its response in the machine, but in the innermost consciousness of himself. It seemed to him unaccountably as though Virginia had called to him for aid—as though somehow she were hopelessly lost, and that he must come East to find her.

Across the distances—the modern distances—on this balmy night, as he sat there with her father in the silence, his thoughts traveled back to Ougheltee where they had left her. Why they had left her there, no one quite knew. She had been tremendously eager to join the uncanny expedition, and yet Paul somehow scented danger in this hunt for the ghost of dead sounds, and they had left her behind for safety's sake. It would have been much better, as events turned out, had she only come with them.

"Paul," said Garthwaite, at length, "what do you say to a stroll?"

"I'm with you," replied Champenois.

Together they descended to the narrow street below and wandered about the huge, sprawling town. They knew Alexandria as they knew their books, and yet there was one thing they had never grown accustomed to—the unexpected was always just around the corner—the unknown mystery of the East was ever with them.

"What's on for to-morrow, Paul?" queried Garthwaite.

"I think," responded Champenois, "the catacombs."

"And after the catacombs, what?" queried the older man.

Champenois puffed silently for a while upon his cigarette. "The voice of Virginia," he mused almost to himself, "we must find that first; possibly we may find it there. And afterwards," he went on, "there are still other things. Garthwaite," he said, almost fiercely, "there are

things I want to know—things that I am going to prove for myself. I want to hear the footfalls of Salome as she danced before Herod. I want to hear the voice of Saul of Tausus on the road to Damascus—” He paused abruptly and looked off into the desert distance. “I want to hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness—I want—”

The older man caught him by the arm. “Paul,” he said gently, shaking his head, “I think maybe Virginia was right; I think you’d better not go too far. You don’t know what lies that way; there may be ruin—madness—”

He stopped, for a startled shriek had burst upon their ears—a woman’s shriek. Champenois shivered as he heard it.

“Where was that, Garthwaite?” he exclaimed.

Garthwaite extended his arm toward a brilliantly lighted spot in the market place. “It came from there,” he said.

They stopped and listened; and once more the shriek assailed their ears. Champenois caught his companion by the arm and dragged him toward the indicated spot. There they found a crowd—a strangely assorted crowd—mostly Alexandrians, but here and there a low-class Englishman. In the midst of this crowd were torches, and on the ground, flung flat upon her face, was a woman of Egypt—a bit of the flotsam and jetsam of Alexandrian humanity—her arms and feet pinioned. Over her stood a man, who, by his dress, was a lower magistrate. At his direction another man applied the bastinado to the soles of the woman’s feet. The woman’s voice rose shriek upon shriek. Champenois, with something agonizing in his face, at first placed his hands over his ears to keep out the sound. In another instant he had parted the crowd with his strong arms and was about to hurl the executioner from the small arena lit by the torches. The crowd gaped at him for one instant. In another instant Garthwaite had drawn him fiercely back into safe obscurity.

“What are you doing, you fool?” he hissed in Champenois’ ear. “You have no right to interfere.”

Champenois fought with him silently for a moment until the shrieks had ceased.

“There,” said Garthwaite, “she has confessed. Robbed some sailor, possibly, of a few cents. Come, let us go away.”

Champenois placed a trembling hand over his face. “I can’t stand a woman’s scream,” he said; “anything but that.”

The next day, with two guides, they visited the Alexandrian catacombs. The light machines were strapped to the backs of the guides—two lowly Alexandrians, who had listened with undisguised awe and admiration to the voices of the long ago. Paul set up his machine just within the entrance while Garthwaite explored the innermost re-

cesses. Little by little Champenois caught fragments of sound that came down to him from the beginning of the Christian era. None of them, however, were satisfactory to him.

For a full week or more he and Garthwaite had studied, with the utmost difficulty, the accent, the patois, the idioms of the older days. Perfect linguists though they were—masters of the dead languages—their own enunciation had been tainted and distorted by the moderns.

But now, as Paul listened, in the silence of his own particular nook, while his guide squatted humbly at his feet, he was able to turn sounds into sense. Suddenly his

soul leaped within him, for he heard in ghostly murmur from all sides the utterance of a name that he had waited for—the name of Cleopatra. But of all the voices that gave utterance to this name, none was Virginian’s. Carefully he adjusted his machine until he had narrowed all the voices down to one. That voice could be scarcely called a voice; it was a croak, composed of harsh, discordant, disagreeable tones. In the midst of it all this voice spoke with startling distinctness:

“I, Cleopatra . . .”

Champenois was upon his guide in an instant, digging his fingers into the man’s shoulder. “Go,” he exclaimed in the patois of the day, “and tell him to come back.”

Frightened, the guide did as he was bid, but already Champenois could see Garthwaite tumultuously racing down the long dim corridor toward himself. Garthwaite’s own guide trailing in the rear.

“Paul,” cried Garthwaite, “this way, quick.”

“This way,” shouted Paul with a gesture toward his machine. But Garthwaite stood his ground and Paul, in this instance the weaker vessel, met the elder man half-way.

“I have found,” began Paul, but Garthwaite only shook his head.

“And I’ve found,” he exclaimed, “something that you’ve got to see.”

Paul groaned. “To see,” he returned; “what do I care about seeing things. I tell you back there there’s everything to hear.”

“You come with me,” proceeded Garthwaite. He dragged him along the narrow corridor, twisting first to the right, then to the left, and finally brought him into a little rounded room about whose walls stood ghostly shadows.

“What have you here?” demanded Paul.

Garthwaite smacked his lips. “Aha!” he exclaimed, “Gabbage, the great American novelist, should be with us. I’ll write him about this, hanged if I don’t, and have him put some of this into his next book. Look here, Paul,” he went on, still with eagerness, “how would you like to have those things plunged, red hot, right into your eyes? Or be shut up with those spikes; or be broken on this



Champenois was upon his guide in an instant digging his fingers into the man's shoulder.

wheel?" He smacked his lips again with relish. "How would you like that, Paul?" he exclaimed.

The old frightened look returned to the face of Champenois; the uncanny glow was once more in his eyes. "A torture chamber!" he exclaimed, shuddering, "a secret torture chamber—*hers*!"

"Whose?" queried Garthwaite.

"Cleopatra's," went on Champenois. He glanced once, twice, thrice, hurriedly at those black and ghostly instruments against the wall, covered his face with his hands and then darted from the room. "I told you," he called back to Garthwaite, "I can't stand things like that. You come with me."

Garthwaite obeyed this time and they went back to Paul's machine. He had arrested its babbling when Garthwaite had called to him, but once more he pulled the lever and in another instant they stood there spellbound.

"Do you understand what she is saying?" demanded Champenois in a whisper. "She, Cleopatra, do you hear her croak—the tones of a hag? Do you realize that she was a hag, old, lean, withered, with a hump upon her back, with the face of a ghoul? Listen, she is saying so herself."

Garthwaite stood like a statue. The two guides crouched upon the floor, staring each other in the face. Now and then they heard a word that their modern ears could understand and at those junctures a gleam of frightened intelligence flashed from their eyes. Garthwaite held up his hand.

"I, Cleopatra....." went on the voice, growing more strident, harsher, fiercer.

"Do you understand her?" went on Champenois in his low whisper. "Do you catch what she says—that, hag as she is, misshapen as she is, she is going to rule the world; she is going to conquer men, kings, emperors. Listen," he cried again. "She is going to do more than that; she is going down into history as the loveliest woman of all time. She swears it, Garthwaite, and she will accomplish it."

Garthwaite smiled grimly. "She did accomplish it," he said, "some two thousand years ago."

Champenois threw off the lever for a moment in order that they might digest fully all that they had heard. They compared notes carefully. There could be no doubt that this self-described hag, whose very voice thrust itself into their very faces, was indeed Cleopatra. The whispered responses of her servants, her courtiers, confirmed it. And there was one thing that stood out in all that motley of abnegation—in every voice but hers there was a note of abject fear; she was ruling with an iron hand. Behind her in the dim recesses of the catacombs was the torture chamber.

"How is she going to do this thing?" demanded Garthwaite. "There must have been historians that could not be bought. There were traditions. How can this distorted witch, in her ugliness, come down to us a siren, Champenois?"

Champenois smiled grimly. "Fortunately," he replied, "we have broken in at the beginning of things. She will tell us how. A woman who speaks as she speaks can accomplish anything. Do we agree on what we have heard?"

"Yes," said Garthwaite.

Once more Champenois pulled the lever and immediately there sprang forth into the dim corridor the same voice, but now tinged with infinite cunning and with calculation. To the few who clustered about her in those dim and secret recesses, she gave her commands. Then pausing for an instant she uttered a name, the name of another woman:

"Iras—send her to me."

At the name of Iras, Champenois, without knowing why, stiffened as with sudden shock. But he said nothing, for down those dim recesses voice after voice took up the cry.

"Iras, come hither, Iras!"

There was another pause and then the full, sweet tones of another woman swept toward them out of the darkness. "I come, Cleopatra," said the voice. "I come."

Then it was that Champenois strode to Garthwaite and clutched him in his iron-like grip.

"She is there," he whispered, shaking from head to foot. "That voice is the voice we have sought."

Garthwaite nodded. "It is Virginia's," he admitted.

For full two days the two men ransacked the catacombs with their machines. For full two days they listened to the scheming of a woman with a mind, but with nothing else to recommend her; not even a heart, possibly not a soul.

"Iras is the substitute," whispered Garthwaite to his younger friend.

Champenois drew breath sharply. "I don't wonder," he said gently, "if Iras then was like Virginia now."

Garthwaite was right. Iras was the substitute; their two days' listening proved it. Iras was the Cleopatra in voice, heart, soul, beauty that had come down to them in history, in song, in story; hers was the face chiseled indelibly on the obelisks; her charms were those written in hieroglyphics. Cleopatra was a dual personage—a crone with a mind, a young girl with every other attribute. It was Iras who was commanded to bring the Cæsars to their knees—to accomplish the downfall of Mark Antony. Whether she obeyed or not was for the ears of but one man to know. That, the two men failed to learn during the days of listening. But they listened to much purpose, for to them it became clear that it was Iras and not her mistress who was wrapped up in the famous carpet that unrolled itself at the feet of Cæsar; it was Iras who leaped therefrom, a bewildering beauty, and knelt before him—and all the while, gnashing her teeth in the dim recesses, was the hunchback sovereign, denied everything but power.

Champenois, as the dusk settled down upon the second day, drew his hand wearily across his face. The lines of fatigue and something else cut into his cheeks like furrows. He wanted to hear more; he wanted to know—but he wanted to find out alone.

"I think we have had about enough for to-day, friend Garthwaite," he exclaimed.

"I've had enough," echoed Garthwaite, wearily.

Champenois placed his hand upon the lever, and then, before he had thrown it off, above all the other voices that assailed their ears, there sprang forth a new voice—the tones of a man.

"Iras," cried this voice. "Where art thou, Iras?"

And then Champenois understood. The voice was his. He threw off the lever swiftly and seized Garthwaite by the arm.

Garthwaite drew back for an instant and searched the face of the younger man.

"What jugglery is this, Paul?" he demanded, looking doubtfully up and down the dim corridor. "What does it mean; what is it leading to?"

"Paul dragged him on." "I don't know," he responded. "We'll find out later on."

He found out later on, but Garthwaite never did. As Paul unstrapped his machine on the shoulders of his guides at the hotel, he dropped a bit of gold into the palm of one and whispered in his ear. Then he ascended to his room.

"I can't eat, Garthwaite," he exclaimed. "I've got to sleep—to sleep. Good-night."

He did not sleep. For hours he tossed upon his bed until he heard the tap, tap that he waited for; then he rose, fully clothed, listened at the door of Garthwaite, smiling at the heavy rasping sounds that emanated from that room, then admitted the stealthy figure of the guide. He strapped one machine on the guide's back and assumed the other one himself. Then together, side by side, they sallied forth to the Alexandrian catacombs whence they had come.

Paul wanted to know for himself, and for himself, alone, the destiny of Iras—that pseudo-Cleopatra. No rest should be his until he ascertained her fate.

He set up both machines now and dismissed his man. That gentleman was glad enough to creep back into the friendly moonlight at the entrance of the corridor, to sit

there crooning gently some little love song to himself for company.

Back in the recesses Paul Champenois with his electric flash adjusted both machines. One he attuned to the human voice, the other to the sound of clanking armor. Then, very carefully, with the use of his magnifying glass, he went back to his breaking-off place of the afternoon—back to his own voice calling down the corridors for Iras. Singularly enough, his voice met with response, but a response in whispers.

"Ptolemy." That was the name that Iras in her tremulous tones was uttering. And then again his own voice leaped from the darkness:

"Iras, my beloved."

And then it was that Iras poured forth into the ears of Ptolemy—the brother of that crooked hag dwelling in the shadows—the story that Champenois already knew. He heard the piteous wails of Iras as she besought Ptolemy for help before it was too late. She told him, amid shudders, of the horrible program that had been laid out for her. He could feel the tightening of Ptolemy's throat; the quickening of his muscular power; the drawing of his scimitar as he listened to the tale.

"Iras—bring her to me. Bedeck thyself, the Cæsar waits."

"No."

It was the voice of Ptolemy. It was his foot that clanked heavily down upon the stones.

"No," he cried again. "Iras—come—with me."

Paul heard the sudden turn they made; heard the swish of their garments as they ran side by side. Then all was pandemonium.

Shouts from all sides rang in his ear; the steady beat of feet upon the floor; the clank, clank of mail and armor; the cries for lights, for assistance, and the excited croak of Cleopatra, all hammered themselves in his ears, and then he knew suddenly that those dim passageways had become the scene of a tremendous battle.

Ptolemy, too, was not without his followers, and they rallied to his standard. Up and down and up and down again the opposing forces charged. Paul heard the clash of swords about him, even in his face. In the very spot where he was standing two warriors with muttered oaths fought like wildcats; fought to the death. All about him, unseen, were rushing, striking, death-dealing figures. He could almost feel their hot breath upon his cheek—could almost see the blood spouting from their wounds. And yet above the din there were three voices that kept beating on his ears—the voice of Cleopatra, a voice of command; the voice of Ptolemy, one of tremendous defiance; and then the voice of Iras, a wail of distress. Suddenly this wail deepened into anguish. There was a new rush, a new scramble along the passageway, and then Paul knew that Ptolemy's efforts had been in vain; knew that they had recaptured Ptolemy's beloved and were bearing her back into the clutches of her mistress. Her wails, her protests as they forced her past him, ate into his very soul. But those wails grew faint and fainter, as he listened, and, in their place, at his side—no, at his back, standing where he stood, almost limb to limb, he heard the breath of Ptolemy struggling mightily with his captor; heard him with a mighty swing twist himself from them; heard the swish of his scimitar through the air, the clash of his mailed hand upon a human skull, and yet he knew that Ptolemy was fighting as one might fight against a stone wall. Do what he could, the valiant brother of Cleopatra, the lover of Iras, could make no headway; he could simply stand and hold his ground and nothing more. Then once more arose the voice of the sovereign.

"Cæsar!" And the answering voice of Iras: "No, Ptolemy, or death."

A laugh of hate—derision—struck into the very marrow of Paul's bones. It was the laugh of the hunchback sovereign. She had come to know in that instant that, substitute though her maid-in-waiting may have been, an unwilling substitute was quite completely unmanageable.

"Death or Cæsar!" she commanded shrilly.

"Death," rang out the voice of Iras. And then the

struggles of the bound Ptolemy recommenced with superhuman vigor.

"No," he bellowed forth. "She is mine, Cleopatra. Iras is mine."

Again his misshapen sister answered with a laugh. "Death," she responded, "and death by the longest way." Then it was that something seemed to snap within the brain of Champenois.

"No, no!" he cried out in agony, "anything but that. He started toward the torture chamber, but found himself powerless to move; in front of him there seemed an impassable host; his arms were bound; his limbs seemed paralyzed.

Suddenly Paul came to his senses—such senses as were left him. He suddenly came to know that he was not bound, that his limbs were not paralyzed; that he was not confronted as with a stone wall, and he took three steps—long, bounding leaps down the corridor. And then he stopped. He laughed wildly to himself as he realized his position. What could he do—how could he aid? Much better to be Ptolemy bursting his sinews against those bonds of old than to be Paul Champenois confronted by nothing but the sounds of old. If he could have battled at that instant it would have saved him. But there was nothing to battle against—nothing. Yet the machine was still recording its impressions.

Shriek after shriek—a woman's shrieks—were beating mercilessly into his consciousness. He hid his face with both hands and struggled, staggered blindly toward the entrance of the corridor.

"I can't stand it!" he yelled, his voice rising in its own agony as he spoke. His brain reeled for an instant and then with a hysteria that came upon him, it seemed to clear. In the very climax of his agony he saw a way of escape. Laughing wildly, peal upon peal, he rushed upon his machines, as Ptolemy had rushed upon the foe.

"God!" he exclaimed to them as though they were human enemies. "Stop, I tell you, stop."

Then pouncing upon them, both at once, he tore them apart, crushed them with his strong hands, threw them to the ground, beating them into a shapeless mass beneath his feet. Then, with bleeding hands and with lips torn by his own teeth, he stalked stiffly, fiercely, out of the mouth of the catacombs, past his crouching, shivering, frightened guide, and on, on into the desert.

Back in the American hotel, at two o'clock in the morning, Gathwaite was awakened by an insistent rapping on his door. He rose and lit the light, inquired who was there, and then opened. It was the landlord, a man with disheveled hair and sleepy countenance, hastily attired, who said a cablegram had just come in. Gathwaite seized it and looked at the address.

"It is for me," he said, trying to shut the door in the man's face; "many thanks. Good-night."

But the landlord was not so easily repulsed. Before the door could be shut upon him, he had inserted one foot and now his entire body into the room.

"Beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but from what I have heard, I thought you might need this."

From behind his back where he had been holding it, he drew a decanter of brandy and glass.

Gathwaite looked at him with puzzled countenance, then he tore open the cablegram and read. It was very brief.

"Virginia killed in railroad wreck to-night. Come home."

Out on the trackless desert there stalked a man muttering to himself in unintelligible tones—the voices of the past. On and on he sped into the wilderness of dead things.

This was Paul Champenois—Egyptologist, archeologist, scientist—destined never to return. He had traversed the haunted corridors of time—he had paid the penalty.

Watch for the story by R. Maxwell M. Smith. It begins in our next issue.

THE SMELL OF GASOLINE

By WILLIS LATHROP

YOUTHFUL, hatless, gloveless, with her glossy black hair slightly disheveled, Ruth Thaxton paused amid the surging throngs of lower Broadway to stare at an unimposing signboard, bearing the words:

ARTHUR KADINGER
PRIVATE DETECTIVE
(UPSTAIRS)

The girl wormed to the inner edge of the host of hurrying, crowding people and peered up a narrow, freshly varnished stairway. Below her, another block, she could make out the ruins of the ill-fated *Times* Building. "This must surely be his place," she muttered to herself, and she started confidently up the stairs.

But she hesitated, half-way up, as though to ask herself, Would the most celebrated private detective in Los Angeles consider a matter concerning which she, a mere girl of twenty, might call? However, it was not merely the uncertainty of getting the interest of the man who had done so much of the work of running the *Times* Building dynamiters to earth which made her pause.

The girl turned and looked down the stairs at the floating mass of heads. She started down the stairs again. As she reached the second from the bottom she saw that two policemen stood directly before the entry. Turning once more, she climbed to the top of the flight, where a sign on a glazed glass door confronted her.

"Walk in. Take a chair. Be patient," it read.

Uncertainly, she grasped the knob and turned it. At this instant the crack of a pistol shot from within startled her. She leaned faintly against the door, which, the knob being still turned, swung inward; and a young man caught her before she could fall to the floor.

The girl, not recognizing in this man's features those of Mr. Kadinger, looked fearfully about the room. Then she realized that she was in no ordinary room. This one was very strangely furnished—strangely to Ruth Thaxton. A somewhat compressed chemical laboratory took up a large portion of the floor space. Showcases containing all manner of queer objects, such as plaster casts of footprints, photographs of fearful-looking human faces, some of them distorted until almost unrecognizable, still other photographs of finger-prints and of things that Ruth did not name or try to understand, and old, rusted weapons of every conceivable sort, occupied the center of the room. One corner of the room, the darkest, was curtained off with black draperies hung on invisible supports, probably for photographic purposes. Ruth felt that the very air was charged with a scientific aspect. She saw a man, among the benches littered with chemical vessels, bending over something, with a small pistol in his hand.

"Do not be alarmed, lady," the man who supported her was saying.

"I'm all right," she said. "I thought some one had been shot."

"Mr. Kadinger was merely working an experiment. Please be seated and he will see you shortly."

The girl did as bidden and fastened her eyes on the man with the pistol. She asked herself countless questions about him. Her mind sought to learn what he was doing, what he could be so deeply interested in, to kneel on the floor, regardless of a neat pair of trousers, as he

did now. At length the man stood erect and she saw his face. It was the same face she remembered seeing in the papers, but she saw something more. He was a man of very nearly if not precisely her father's stature. She had not known this before.

A moment later the detective sat facing her, his eyebrows drawn in curious sympathy. The girl started to search for a forgotten card, but the detective halted her.

"Never mind," he said kindly. "No introduction is needed. But your father—is he injured? Or possibly—"

"Yes, it is true," said the girl.

"That he has been murdered?"

"Yes! But how did you guess it without my telling you?" she asked, astonishment suddenly seizing her.

"In asking the question, you answer it. I merely guessed it."

"But how?"

Kadinger smiled indulgently. The explanation plainly did not interest him. "Your father would have sent you to me only under such unusual circumstances as you admit. Hence I supposed that he had been injured. But since he was—well, since what you say is true, my deduction is wrong, for you have come of your own accord. You have come hurriedly, for your hair, if you will pardon me, has not been dressed for the street. Also fashionable young ladies usually wear gloves, which you do not. Nor do they permit the sound of a revolver to take such an extraordinary effect on them. From your hurry I should deduce that possibly the deed has been done recently, very recently."

"It is true. But since you know my father as well as I believe you do, you must be aware that there was no one who would wish to or have any reason to want to do such a thing as that."

"There, Miss Thaxton, I'm not so sure. Your father was an influential man here in Los Angeles. As a prosecuting attorney he may have innocently caused more than one person to feel enmity toward him. Unlike you, Miss Thaxton, I should not have been at all surprised, though I am grieved, to hear this news." As he said this, Kadinger sat back in his chair and appeared to take no more real interest in the matter than he would in the theft of a few cents from a cash register.

"Then you are not at liberty to take the case?" Ruth asked anxiously.

"Strictly speaking, that is true. It is hard to leave my experiments just now. But when it is a personal friend who has been a victim to some evil will, it is very different. Your father's fate must be avenged. Now, I would like to know how and when it happened? Give me first the simple, unembellished circumstances of the case. You will have occasion to elaborate later."

"I was in the library," commenced the girl, "about three o'clock this afternoon, when I heard the shot. It was very faint, but I thought that it came from upstairs. It was so faint that I was not even startled. But of course it made me feel uneasy, so I took out the revolver that father had in the library table drawer, and rushed up to his study, intending to assist him if he were in trouble, though I did not suppose he had been injured. But when I found the new roomer standing at the door of the study, the strange, half-frightened look in his face thoroughly alarmed me. I opened the door and—well, you know what I found."

"After that I scarcely knew what I did. Something told

me, without my actual investigation, that my father was dead. The surprise was complete to me. We had been living peaceful and unmolested, without the merest suggestion of such a possibility. At any rate, if father had any worry or suspicion he was exceptionally uncommunicative about it, for in my presence he was as carefree and unexcitable as I ever knew him to be. It must have driven me mad for the moment. The first thing I did was to accuse my roomer, Mr. Klyne, of the deed. He denied the accusation, but without any show of emotion of any sort. Instead, he suavely invited me to search his pockets. He was more courteous than commonly, and I suspected something, but I had the revolver ready and I know how to shoot, so I went ahead. I went through every pocket I could find."

"What did you find in his pockets?" Kadinger asked, in a quiet, disinterested tone, which belied the curiosity which Ruth felt must possess him. "I must know that in detail."

"There was nothing worth mentioning," Ruth replied dejectedly.

"How do you know?" Kadinger asked, still disinterestedly leaning back in his chair and watching the girl as though she were some member of the police force discussing the weather with him. "It may mean a vital clue to our man."

"Merely a handkerchief, a matchbox, and an old, rusty iron magnet," his client responded, with what Kadinger felt to be a slight show of eagerness which she had striven to conceal.

A long pause followed and the girl seemed to think, with lowered gaze. Kadinger did not attempt to hurry her, for experience had told him that clients usually gave more accurate information when given their leisure, particularly women. After some minutes the girl resumed:

"We entered the study then, and it was now that I assured myself that my only parent and friend was actually dead. I could find no wound on him, no matter where, or how diligently I searched. Neither could I find any weapon in the room. But I was certain I had heard a report; I was equally confident my father had neither died by heart-failure nor paralysis, or least of all by suicide."

"There is a hole in the wall between the study and the next room, which is dismantled for repairs. Believing that the shot might have been fired through that hole, I searched that room, but there was not much searching necessary, for the room is quite empty save for a few paper hangers' supplies. I then went over the entire house, searching every conceivable place where a possible weapon could be concealed—even the garrets. But I found nothing. It took time, and when I had finished Klyne was gone and his room was locked. The maid has the other key to his room. After that I decided to come to you."

"So!" said the detective, with a suddenness which caused the girl to start slightly. "Why were you so interested in locating a weapon, Miss Thaxton?" he asked suddenly.

The girl, startled a second time, stammered, "Why—why shouldn't I—why wouldn't anybody be?"

"I am not interested in why you shouldn't be, but I am very anxious to know why you were so interested," the detective rejoined. "However, if it is not to your interest to inform me, we'll let it go at that," he added, with a smile of condescension. "Who knows of the crime?"

"No one but Klyne. I gave the cook and the maid the afternoon on leave to enjoy Labor Day. They give so much better service under this sort of treatment."

"H'm. A time is chosen when the servants are away and only you and your father were present," mused Kadinger. "Who is this tenant you designate as Mr. Klyne?"

"Mr. Kadinger, if I had known who he was, I should have sought the aid of the police and a lawyer, not a detective. That is the question I wish you to answer."

"How long has he been with you?"

"Since yesterday morning at nine."

"And his full name is—?"

"Mr. A. Klyne."

"I dare say. Tell me all you can about him. Since you suspect him so persistently, he is evidently an important personage in the game. By the way, how did you happen to be keeping him? I did not suppose your father would allow himself to be bothered with a roomer, as wealthy as he must be."

"You are right. Father did not ordinarily rent rooms, much less board people; but recently he wanted a gardener, to whom he intended to give one of the poorer rooms, and who was to board with the servants. He used a placard as well as advertising in the papers, for the latter advertisements didn't seem to bring the right sort of man, and he needed a man at once. Klyne came. He said he would like to get into his room and settled immediately. He couldn't furnish any recommendations, but he seemed very insistent and he knew some things about gardening. I was rather surprised that father finally accepted him and gave him one of our best spare rooms, until the other should be ready. Either he was overanxious to get a man, or else his curiosity was aroused. Father had a temperamental curiosity about any stranger, and he told me afterward that Mr. Klyne appealed to him as an interesting individual."

"And I agree with him," Kadinger put in.

"He brought with him a brown leather suit-case," his client continued. "He was rather small in stature, fittingly dressed, and had a sallow, and, I thought, a very closely shaved face. Father decided to have him eat with us, at least over Sunday, probably expecting to learn more or less about him, but he was disappointed, for he turned out to be a very reticent man. He simply would not converse at meals, and when he did speak, it was not pleasantly, though he showed no enmity or any suggestion of a threat in his manner. We were unable to learn whence he came, what business he was in, or anything of that sort. He would merely make some curt reply to the effect that he was weary of popularity and of answering questions that were always being asked of him and wanted a little taste of solitude."

"All Sunday and to-day he did not leave the house, but spent the whole time, except when at meals, in his room, where he seemed to be always busy at some occupation. I felt no dislike or feeling of suspicion regarding him, though I thought him peculiar, so I had no reason for wishing to learn what kept him so well occupied."

"Did he seem to be anxious when you searched the study for a weapon?"

"No."

"Did you observe nothing suspiciously odd in his manner?"

"I noticed nothing at all. He acted just as a curious spectator would act."

"No doubt, Miss Thaxton. But I'm afraid you made a very serious mistake to leave him unguarded while you probed the entire house for a weapon. You were well armed. Why did you not keep the man a prisoner and call in the police?"

"But, Mr. Kadinger, if you were in my present position, would you not much prefer to have a detective with a reputation, like yourself, quietly studying out the situation, instead of the police?"

"I do not know why I should," Kadinger replied, and added as an afterthought: "The police will work for nothing, while private detectives are rather an expensive luxury."

"But I do not mind the expense in the least. Why should you object if I prefer your services?"

"I have no objection, Miss Thaxton, but even detectives have to pry. They cannot do everything by ratiocination. We must have the facts. But you didn't hold your prisoner, or call the police, so I suppose we must handle the case as it is, not as it might have been, though it is the more involved."

The detective watched the changing expressions of the girl's face closely as he spoke these words; and then his glance fell. "Hello!" he said suddenly. "My assistant handled you rather roughly, it seems. There are painful-

looking finger-nail marks on both your wrists. How did it happen?"

Ruth recounted how she had stood at the door, wondering whether it was expedient to seek his aid when she had heard the report. Kadinger listened thoughtfully while she related the incident, his vision fixed constantly on the cruel imprints on her wrists. He made no comment on the matter, but said:

"This is likely to be a very interesting case, my dear miss. For your sake, I hope that we may reach a satisfactory solution. We shall do our best, at any rate. Now, if you have nothing more to communicate, I'll have my assistant take you to your home in our car. With nothing to prevent, I shall be there to-night."

At seven that evening a large motor car came quietly to a stop before one of the less pretentious mansions on the western outskirts of the city. Detective Kadinger climbed out from behind the wheel and at the same moment, Ruth Thaxton appeared at the front door. She had no doubt been watching for him.

Kadinger's first impression of the place was a peculiar one. This was owing to no unusual feature about the residence itself, which was natural and commonplace to the keenly observant eyes of the detective. But as the scene of a crime it was quite out of the ordinary. He had known that he would be the first outsider to make an investigation, that such was his privilege; but to see only the girl who had called on him instead of the inevitable excited, curious crowds, the reporters, police and central office operatives to which he had been used, was bizarre. Here there were none of them; not even the surrounding neighborhood having learned, it seemed, that an atrocious crime had been perpetrated in the large, isolated dwelling.

"You are here on time," Ruth remarked, as she admitted him to a rather dimly lighted hall.

"I always endeavor to be, Miss Ruth. Now, to business. Did you tell me the study was on the upper floor?"

Ruth, assuming an attitude of eager anticipation, which did not pass unseen, answered: "Yes. Shall I show you to it?"

"No, thank you. I do not wish to go there just yet," Kadinger said slowly, peering at Ruth from beneath drawn

eyebrows. "What moved me to ask was that it seems rather unusual to locate a study on the second floor. Why do you suppose he chose to have it there?"

"I do not suppose. I know. He planned for that when he had the house built. He chose to have it at the rear of the house for the same reason. He knew it would be more secluded there than in other parts of the house, and that was what he desired. He did a great deal of studying here at home, and of course he didn't wish to be disturbed."

Kadinger gave a nod of understanding and, looking about with an air of affability, muttered: "An added inducement to the assassin."

After some moments of silent meditation, Kadinger said slowly: "Miss Ruth, would you object if I chose to begin by taking a look at the revolver you took from the library table drawer?"

The girl stood near the banister post; and as Kadinger's words melted into her benumbed senses, she reached out her hand and leaned against it. "No. Why should I?" she asked, vainly striving to conceal her bewilderment.

"I did not ask why you should; I asked whether you would object."

The girl did not answer, but bowed her head as though in subjection to some evil fate.

Kadinger hesitated but a moment and then made up his mind. Allured by an innate curiosity, to reveal what it he would have a look at the revolver, reveal what it might against the girl. He was acquainted with most types of California mansions and so found his way into the library easily enough. He found the pistol lying on the table; he examined it carefully; at length he broke it, and five empty blank cartridges, loosened by the automatic extractor, dropped into his hand. To say that he was surprised would be a platitude. He was prepared to find an empty revolver, even one with empty, or part empty, cartridges in it; but even his astute mind was not open to the possibility of unearthing empty blank shells.

He returned the cartridges to the chambers, closed the breech, and studied the initials carved on the wooden butt. Then he pocketed the pistol and returned to his client. And he did not go in a hurry.

"Mr. Kadinger, I knew you would suspect me when you saw that revolver!" Ruth exclaimed bitterly.

"So I supposed," was Kadinger's grave rejoinder.

"We must admit that things look a little serious for

you. What have you in the way of an explanation on this matter?"

"Nothing. There is just the difficulty. I cannot explain it to myself, to say nothing of offering explanation to any one else. I have intimated—or I thought I did—that you would meet with strange things like this. I thought it was a part of your profession to solve such difficulties."

"Quite right. But detectives are not omnipotent. We



Ruth saw him feel over the ceiling and then cut into it with the knife.

must have something to go on. Are you certain that this revolver I found in the library is the same you found there?"

"Let me see it and I can tell you."
But the other did not comply with her suggestion. "Suppose you describe it," he proposed.

"It was just an ordinary revolver with a wooden handle and a rather long barrel. At least I thought so."

"Shiny or dark?"

"Shiny."

"Did it have any peculiar mark by which you could identify it?"

"Yes, it had father's initials carved in the handle."

"On which side?"

"Why, I thought—yes, I am certain they were on both sides. And there was a little cinquefoil design on the back of the handle."

"Do you know what the cylinder contained—what kind of cartridges?"

"I do now, but I did not before it happened. They are empty."

"What kind of empty shells?"

Ruth looked up perplexedly into her inquisitor's face. "I don't understand what you mean by that," she avowed.

Kadinger got out the pistol and placed it in her hand. "Open it and see—"

But the girl sought futilely for the proper method to break it.

"How did you know they were empty cartridges if you did not know how to get them out?" was Kadinger's next query.

"Why, it was broad daylight then. I could hold it toward the light and look down the barrels."

"I dare say. Well, that will do for this," said Kadinger. He resumed possession of the weapon and then, in a kindly tone, continued: "What were some of the other curious things you couldn't explain?"

"Most of them I have already told you, but—well, in fact I have told you all of them that are important."

Kadinger, without attempting to pump his client further, announced that, with her sanction, he would examine the study room at once.

"Things look interesting," he told himself, as he followed Ruth up the stairs. "The man is dead; yet no wound has been found on him. A shot is heard, but no revolver is to be found. At the time the shot was fired, this revolver was in the library table drawer. Deuced interesting!"

At the head of the stairs Kadinger brought out his pocket-lamp, searched around, and switched on a light. The twilight had become so faint that the interior of the house was in darkness, save for the upper hall, which was now flooded with lamplight.

"First, Miss Ruth, I'd like to know the why and wherefore of every room on this floor. Which did our friend Klyne occupy?"

"This room on the right," said Ruth.

By the time they had reached the farther end of the hall, the detective had a clear idea of the plan of the upper floor. There were four rooms on either side of the hall. On the right were two guest rooms, the second of which Klyne had occupied, then the bathroom, and a bed chamber occupied by the two servants. On the left as they walked up the hall, they passed Ruth's chamber, her father's, the room intended for the gardener, which was under repair, and at length arrived at the door of the study room. Just beyond this the hall terminated in a flight of stairs which led to the garret.

After a last glance along the hall, Kadinger tried the door of the study. It was locked.

"Here is the key," said Ruth.

"You locked it?"

She nodded.

As the door swung open he turned again to Ruth. "Do you mind being within easy summons? I may need your help," he said. Then he flashed his light into the room. He observed that the door was at the corner of the room. In the opposite corner the electric rays revealed a man

seated in a swivel chair with his head and right arm resting on an ordinary office desk. In the east wall, not far from the desk, was a window, and in the south wall another. Along all the walls except that separating the study from the room adjoining were book shelves or movable bookcases. In this one wall, very near the floor, he noticed the hole left by a radiator pipe which his client had mentioned.

Turning to her, he asked: "Did your father often go to sleep at his desk?"

"Never," Ruth asserted. "He never under any circumstances slept in a chair. I am positive of that. We were all alike in that respect. Why should he? He had plenty of opportunity for sleep and he was in perfect health."

Kadinger seemed satisfied. He drew down both the blinds, lit the lamp above the desk, and proceeded to examine the corpse. It was obvious at once that no assault had been made on the attorney. Kadinger concluded that the crime had been committed stealthily. Suicide was out of the question. He knew the attorney too well for that, even though a man might easily have done it with a poison capsule. The face was calm, showing no signs of pain. At first he could find no wound, and he remembered that the girl had made a statement to this effect earlier in the day. His opinion was that the deceased must have met his fate from shock, heart failure, or some strange physical ailment. Having decided it was time to summon the coroner, he left the object of his examination. Then he checked himself abruptly. Was it possible that a sandbag had been used? He went through the hair of the victim, watching closely for the merest indication. What he found was more conspicuous and quite of a different nature from what he anticipated. A groove extended down the right side of the head from the crown to the ear. No blood had been shed, but the skin had been torn away, leaving the flesh bare for almost an inch. The flesh was slightly swollen along this strange groove. Kadinger knew he had found the cause of the death.

"In Ruth's opinion this discovery could not have contributed much toward an explanation. She saw Kadinger stand for some time before the body of her deceased father before he returned to the door where she stood, and said: 'I know this inquisition is not pleasant to you, but you have brought it on yourself and it is part of my investigation. Are you certain that you heard a revolver shot?'"

"I am certain that I heard a report, but naturally I cannot be certain whether it was a revolver."

"But you unmistakably heard a report?"

"I am positive. Why?"

"Because this wound has been inflicted by means of a B. B. shot, and these shots are used only in air guns, which make no report."

"But—aren't there—how do you know it was?"

"Because of the nature of the wound."

"But father used to tell me there were very small revolvers."

"So there are, but when I said I deduced this from the nature of the wound, I did not imply that size had anything to do with it. In fact, it does not. The force which this created was just the force that would come from an air-rifle or pistol, which is too weak for any revolver. Even if I did not know that, I know that the bullet was indeed a B. B., for I found it on the rug. Miss Ruth, I am much indebted to you for introducing me to a most delightfully interesting mystery."

"I assure you I shall be greatly indebted to you if you clear it up," Ruth earnestly rejoined.

"No doubt," Kadinger smiled. "There must be an answer, however paradoxical as your testimony and my evidence seem to be. Now I'll have a look at our friend Mr. Klyne's room. Do you suppose he will object?"

"You don't think he is in there, do you?"

"No, hardly. But he evidently had some reason for not desisting intrusion."

"I'm afraid you will have to spoil a good lock, but no matter."

But Kadinger had more efficient means of penetrating keyless barriers. He produced a set of skeleton keys and

had the door open in five seconds. He remained in the room for fully half an hour, and when he emerged his brows were beetled.

"Did you find anything?" Ruth greeted him with avid anticipation.

"Very little," Kadinger replied, and saw the beseeching eagerness in the girl's face fall away; then, as though changing his mind, he went on: "But quite enough to give me the whole case in a nutshell!"

"What! What could that possibly be?" demanded Ruth, seriously taken aback.

"The smell of gasoline!"

"How could that—"

"You will know in good time, my girl," the detective interrupted.

"Then you know everything?"

"Everything save the actual identity of our man. It all came to me while I was alone in that room."

"And you know even—"

"That you fired twice on the roomer? Yes, Miss Thaxton. I know now why you knew that your pistol was loaded with empty shells and why you did not know what kind of shells they were."

"But Mr.—"

"Oh, I don't deny that you held the gun up to the window to see if it was not loaded. You wondered why the second shot didn't go off. Yes, and another thing. I know that those interesting little marks on your wrists were not caused by my assistant. We will soon verify that, for I can easily summon him by telephone. Another thing: I know why you did not hold your prisoner—because you knew you were helpless, with a useless gun; and why you locked the study door."

"Then you surely know that I am innocent?" inquired the girl.

"Also, Miss Thaxton, I know why the crime was committed when you, personally, had dismissed your servants for the afternoon."

Ruth did not attempt to repeat her query.

A moment later she discovered that she was alone, and soon she discerned the reason. She heard the detective calling a number on the telephone. Twenty minutes later the doorbell rang and she admitted the young man who had caught her when she was at Kadinger's quarters. Kadinger greeted him with a curt, though congenial nod, and said: "Hunt, I know you're a bit bashful about holding women's hands, but this is important. I want you to take this young lady by the wrists and see if your fingers reach the marks you will find on them. Miss Thaxton, you will aid us immeasurably by holding out your hands without scruples for this young man, as though you expected to have handcuffs slipped over them."

"But—but surely you don't intend to arrest me?"

"Certainly not. Merely a whimsical remark of mine. Why the alarm?"

Haltingly, the girl held out her hands, and during the demonstration she glanced fearfully at the detective more than once. But the stern look which had come upon his features for a moment had departed. He stood close beside her, watching her quietly, one hand in his trouser pocket, the other toying with his watch fob.

"Now, you see that Mr. Hunt's finger nails could not have made those awful dents. It seems to me the hands which made them must have been peculiarly short."

"Not my father's. No, no," moaned the girl. A hand was placed on her shoulder, but when she looked up there was a kindly light in the detective's eyes that had not been there before.

"I know that your father did not make those marks, Ruth, but some one did. The thing to do is to get at the man who did make them as soon as possible, before those blockheads come here and say you have done the thing yourself and carry you off and convict you on the evidence they could pick up. We must be at it before it is too late. To-morrow court will resume session and your father's absence will be looked into."

"First, I wish to ascertain just what likelihood there is of the shot being fired through that hole in the wall."

Hunt, you have a slender hand, even though not such long fingers as this assassin. Also, I told you to bring the smallest revolver in our laboratory with you. Ah, you have it. Now we'll see if you can put it through that hole."

Kadinger led the way to the room adjoining the study and entered. Here, as in the study, he drew the blinds before lighting the room.

The younger man promptly stretched himself out on the floor as bidden, and thrust a small revolver through the aperture where light from the other room had come through.

"Now, Ruth," said Kadinger, "you see we have two witnesses besides yourself to the fact that the shot could not have been fired through that hole. It is not in line with the chair; hence the assassin must have put his hand as well as the pistol through the hole—which Mr. Hunt obviously could not do—and must have fired blindly with ninety-seven chances against three of hitting his mark. Hunt, if you will go down and bring me my claw-hammer, you may take the car to the garage and go to bed."

"You are certain you will not need me again?"

"No, but I'll trouble you in the morning for that hundred you bet me on the case."

"What! You haven't solved it already?"

"Hold your head, boy. I said in the morning."

A few minutes later Kadinger went over the entire wall between the study and the adjoining room, tapping every square inch that he could reach with his hammer. Finally he paused as though reaching a conclusion.

Ruth, watching him curiously, asked: "What were you doing?"

"I was looking for another hole in this wall."

"What a queer way to look for a hole. Why not just—just look for it?"

"Because the sort of hole I was seeking is invisible to the eye."

"Invisible?"

"Yes."

"And you still think that my father was shot through a hole in the wall?"

"Yes. In fact I do not merely think so. I am fairly certain, if you really searched that man Klyne thoroughly. Did you?"

"Yes. He made no resistance at all until after I was satisfied with my search."

"I thought likely."

"Did you find a hole?"

"No."

"Then how can you know that it is true?"

"Because if no weapon was found on him or anywhere in the house it must be hidden in some wall. It could not have been your revolver, for that could not be used to fire a B. B. shot, though I think a twenty-two calibre could. Besides, you said the shot was very faint. He was a clever fox! But I think I have him by the muzzle, so to speak. Where can I get a step-ladder?"

"Why do you want a step-ladder?" asked Ruth, growing more and more perplexed.

"Because there is no other wall through which a shot could be fired. The wall between the study and the hall is out of the question, because of those stairs and the book-shelves on the inside. Besides, it has just occurred to me that the thing would be too liable to discovery, if the hole was located in a wall. It is obvious to me that he had some definite premeditated plan in mind, which demanded that the weapon, whatever it was, should not be found, at least for a given length of time. I was performing an experiment at the time you called on me which proves that the largest bullet which will pass through wall-paper without leaving an open hole is known as a B. B. shot. As we know, this deed was done by this sort of a bullet. Now we might discover the crack in a wall, but such a tiny rupture would never be observed in the ceiling paper, unless it was deliberately searched for."

"Then he shot through the attic floor?"

"To the best of my belief."

"But I was up there and nothing was disturbed. He

could not remove a board and then replace it and be at at the study door when I reached it?"

"He didn't do it that way. He had the board nicely nailed down when he fired the shot."

Kadinger glanced at Ruth with an amused smile as he observed her new perplexity.

The detective picked his way to the rear of the mansion with a singular ease for one who had never entered it before. He passed through a flower garden and found his way blocked by a large sliding door. He found that this was not locked, and forced it open far enough to admit his slightly robust form. Once inside, his flashlight showed him a large touring car. He paused to look it over for a moment. He played the powerful shaft of light from his pocket-lamp on the hood and observed that it was not clamped down on one side. He moved to the other side and turned the light on it. Here it was fastened down. Kadinger lifted the side of the hood that was unfastened and examined the large six-cylinder motor closely. Then with a curt nod to himself, he closed the hood again. In a far corner of the garage his lamp revealed a ladder, which he picked up and carried into the house.

Before setting up the ladder, he removed the corpse to an out-of-the-way corner of the room, covered it with a bed sheet, and also moved the chair. He placed the ladder in the exact position of the chair and, jack-knife in hand, climbed upon it. Ruth, attracted by his renewed activities, saw him feel over the ceiling and then cut into it with the knife, when with an exultant "Aha!" he descended.

"It is as I surmised," said he. "Look at this bit of paper."

He had cut an almost perfectly circular bit of paper from the ceiling. Ruth took it and scrutinized it.

"Do you see any hole?" asked Kadinger.

"No. There seems to be nothing. Did the bullet go through this?"

"Undoubtedly. You can see for yourself. I will flash my lamp up through the hole and you will find the revolver which fired the shot."

Kadinger moved the ladder aside and bade the girl look into the hole.

"But how could it be possible?"

"It is as I explained a few minutes ago. The plaster was removed from behind the paper, and instead of a standard revolver bullet a mere B. B. or air-rifle shot was used.

"But there is no hole at all in this bit of paper," Ruth protested.

Kadinger produced a small magnifying glass. "Examine it closely and you will see—"

"Yes. There is a slight crack in the paper."

"A very clever scheme, was it not?"

"Yes, I suppose it was; but surely the man who unearthed it was by far the cleverer," said Ruth, turning two disconcerting black eyes full upon Kadinger.

"Now," he went on, "we'll find out how he could fire a B. B. shot from a twenty-two calibre revolver, as he must have done since he did not take the trouble to locate a smaller calibre revolver, a thing which is rare in our country."

Kadinger climbed the attic stairs and Ruth followed him. Taking a two-foot rule, he measured two and one-half feet out from the west wall and then four feet, nine inches from the south end gable. Marking the point where the two measurements coincided, he explained to Ruth: "That is exactly the position of your father's chair from the two respective walls of the room, and also the exact position of the hole I made in the ceiling."

With his claw-hammer, he tore up a floor board. At the spot he had indicated his pocket-lamp revealed a queer piece of woodwork.

"Pretty poor carving," he opined. "You see now how he spent part of his time while secluded in his room. Doubtless if you had tried his door you would have found it locked."

As he said this, he knelt on the floor, smashed a wooden clamp which had been tightly glued to the laths, with a

blow of his hammer, and picked up a pistol by the barrel, which was remarkably short.

"He was fortunate enough to obtain a revolver that would go under the floor," he reflected.

Kadinger carried the curious-looking little weapon down to the library, lighted the table lamp, and invited Ruth to be seated. "Now we'll see what is in it," he said, as he seated himself next to his client. He drew the extractor and emptied the seven chambers in the cylinder.

"Also blank cartridges," he announced, and so they were, six of them good, the seventh empty. Then he took from his inner coat pocket a small envelope and inverted it, allowing a small lead ball to roll into the palm of his hand. "This is what I found on the floor of the study," he explained. He set one of the small blank cartridges on its end and placed the little ball on its open mouth. Then he said to Ruth: "You see how neatly it fits. Take a good look at the pellet under the glass. Do you see that little groove running around it, like a latitude line on the earth's surface? That is where the dome-like rim of the shell cut it when he hammered it in, like this." Taking the tiny pellet and placing it on the mouth of a cartridge, Kadinger tapped it lightly several times with his hammer. "Now try to pull them apart," he said, handing the cartridge with its improvised bullet to Ruth, who failed to accomplish the feat.

"Now we know how and why the whole thing was done," said Kadinger, with a long sigh of satisfaction.

"We?" exclaimed Ruth. "Why, I am as much in the dark as ever. How you learned what passed between me and Mr. Klyne I cannot understand, nor how a man can fire a revolver when there is a floor between him and the weapon, as you claim he can."

"So? Well, it's almost as simple as falling off a log." "Then falling off a log must be a very complicated feat."

"You will not think so when I tell you."

The detective sat carefully before the table, staring at the small pistol, and occasionally glancing at his client. Obviously he was thinking. After a long pause he resumed his speech, as though in answer to the girl's beseeching eyes.

"There have been cases before in which a woman tried to defend some one of her family who was in danger, only to find that the pistol she had snatched up hastily was useless because it had been tampered with—plenty such cases. Most of them have been very common, as you may easily learn if you study the court records. Only a few of them had any *outré* features about them, and most of these were due to mere whims, nothing more. In some cases the revolver was found to be empty; in other empty shells had been substituted for those with which it had been loaded; in still other cases the mechanism of the pistol had been clogged or put out of working order in numerous ways. In fact, there are various ways that such a trick may be played. The purpose is always the same. The criminal uses this as a safeguard for himself in case he is apprehended either before, while, or after his purpose is accomplished. There have been a few cases where the revolver itself was used in the crime, but these are rare, for this trick does not seem to be a very useful one.

"Now, what would you decide were you to find a revolver loaded with empty shells if your suspect did not know, or pretended not to know, how to open it?"

"That the suspect had fired the same number of shots, I suppose."

"So you would. Or you might think that the suspect had nothing to do with it, that some one else did the work of loading the gun with those shells. This is what the acute-minded police official might think. Now, you wished to know how I learned that you pulled the trigger twice. I will tell you.

"Miss Ruth, when I looked at that pistol, which I made certain you had used earlier in the day, because you had described it accurately, I saw that this case was quite different from those I have mentioned. The empty shells were not the ordinary sort, for their rims were slightly curved in, which of course meant that they were blanks."

I also ascertained that at least one of them had not been an empty shell less than five hours previous, for the gun smelled of powder. That is how I know it was fired once.

"I know, however, that there had only been one shell loaded, because the shell which remained locked by another blow of the hammer had two well-marked grooves where two different hammers must have struck it. These nicks were nearly at right angles to each other. Now, cartridges never turn around in a chamber after the hammer has struck the first time. Even supposing that they did, the cartridge would not be apt to miss fire the first time, particularly under the force which either of the grooves attested to. The other three shells had one groove each, but they did not point toward the center of the cylinder, but in any direction, showing that these shells had likewise been put in empty, but that no attempt was made to use them a second time. That is how I learned that you tried to shoot a second time, and not a third time.

"Three possible motives for your action occurred to me. First of all there was the possibility that you had murdered your father, if you will pardon me for mentioning unpleasant thoughts. Secondly, you might have fired in self-defense, and thirdly, in an attempt to detain some one you took to be the criminal. But those finger-nail marks seemed to be very strong proof of the first-named suspicion, particularly since you had not admitted the true cause of them. It was not until I found the wound that I saw that this theory was really impossible.

"Indeed, Miss Ruth, everything seemed to point toward this theory; the fact that you had dismissed your servants; those frightful marks on your wrists, which are quite capable of being made by your father's hands, and which would have been made in that case under the pain of mortal fear; and the fact that the wound was invisible. Perhaps it might have transpired that you were responsible in one way or another for having that pipe hole made in the wall; I am not sure. There was your fear of being suspected, which was unmistakable when you asked me if I knew you were innocent. I heard your question and was conscious of hearing it, but I did not answer it because I wished to test your state of mind further. When I suggested bracelets, your response fully assured me that I was on the right track this time. Then there was your diligent search for the other weapon. I didn't have to assume that you were telling the truth, for I could see that everything in the house had been moved and replaced less carefully than some one else, with a dishonest motive, would have replaced it. You had your reason for searching the place as thoroughly as you did. It would be a pretty sleepy investigator who wouldn't see from what clues I have picked up that you have been very cleverly framed!"

"This is wonderful!" said the girl, with the ring of admiration and awe in her tone.

"Marvelous, as Watson would say, eh?"

"Seriously it is, Mr. Kadinger."

"I fail to see anything marvelous about it. The very first clue, the bizarre feature of finding a good cartridge in an otherwise harmless gun that has obviously been tampered with by another than the user gives one a strong suggestion of what is to follow. The fact that this one is a blank cartridge suggests who it is expected to be used against. So what is there that is marvelous in deducing from what we know that you fired at Klyne and why you did it? Of course, the man wanted this shot to be fired. That was part of his frame-up. How he made you fire the shot is a mere matter of synthetical reasoning. If anything would make a girl wish to fire in self-defense, it is to have a man grab her by the wrists and dig till the pain drives her frantic. Of course your explanation to me of why you accused him of the crime was not sincere. I could see that. Then there was the other reason for wanting those marks made—they also were part of the frame-up. After that he must have delivered quite an eloquent lecture to explain the thing to you in such a way as to impress upon you the fear of suspicion and arrest which you manifested. Little wonder you did not choose to talk about some things, even to a detective!

"But now you may rest easy, for thanks to this clever criminal's two slight oversights, you are safe. He did not figure on the two hammer marks on the second cartridge, nor the smell of gasoline!"

"What has the smell of gasoline to do with it?" Ruth asked.

"A great deal. Is all the rest plain to you?"

"No, I cannot understand how he could have fired the shot, as you claim he did, without raising a cloud."

"Naturally. And yet you held in your own hand the instrument which would enable him to do this apparently impossible trick."

"I? What?" cried Ruth.

An amused flash shone in Kadinger's eyes. "To be sure," he said. "Ruth, has the car been used since he came here?"

"No. Why?"

"I thought not, because one of the magnets of the magneto is missing. Here is where the smell of gasoline comes in. The magnet you found in his pocket was rusty, according to your statement, while those of the magneto are greasy. The gasoline was one of the mediums of disguise; and a little gasoline removed the grease, so that the hydro-oxide combination, whatever it was, perhaps aided by some electrolytic process, could rust the metal. You see that the trigger of this pistol is tied back by a bit of fine wire. All he had to do, then, was to draw the magnet, at its full capacity, across the spot where his weapon was concealed, and the atrocious deed was done."

Ruth glanced skeptically at the habitually half-frowning eyebrows of the detective. "I would not have supposed a magnet strong enough for such a purpose," she said. "Of course I am not very familiar with such things, and I never had occasion to give it a thought before; but—"

"That might easily seem to be the case," Kadinger gently interrupted her. "Doubtless that is one reason why our man chose such a tool. But when you are speaking of a magnet just removed from the magneto of a six-cylinder motor, then it is a different matter. Not only is this an unusually large type of magnet, but it is at its full capacity—that is, it is keyed up with all the magnetism it can contain within its volume and composition of steel. This is not true of the ordinary magnet that little boys are allowed to play with; if it were, they would be apt to get their fingers pinched. The reason is that toy magnets, and most magnets, in fact, are not made in size nor of the right kind of metal to maintain full capacity long; and moreover a magneto magnet has a current of electricity alternating through it whenever the motor is running, which keeps its capacity constantly loaded to the maximum. This means that one such magnet, just removed from the magneto, would be easily capable of cocking a revolver with a weak hammer spring."

"Very simple, isn't it, now?"

"Yes," Ruth admitted.

A pause of several seconds ensued.

"But still it doesn't tell us who he was or why he did it," the girl resumed.

"Doesn't it? I'm not so positive of that, but I'm inclined to think it does."

"I cannot see how it would."

"You are too timid to draw a conclusion. That is the case with most people. They are not used to abstruse reasoning and so they fear that if they follow in the path of the lawyer, or the detective, without his training they tread on infernal ground. Besides, you are obviously not in the best of spirits. Now, I should say that the person who perpetrated this crime was on bail."

"What! How can you know that?" The girl who had been leaning back and staring listlessly over the table lamp now sat erect, manifesting none of the weariness which Kadinger had observed.

"It is merely a problem in ratiocination," he remarked.

"Mr. Kadinger, you said that you could not do everything by reason, but—"

"Which is true. We must have something to reason with, and I have it. This person is on bail because he chose two short days during which court was not in ses-

sion in which to plan his crime. Had he been a working man, he could by some means or other have procured his liberty for a greater time. If he was a man with his own business, this would have been a very easy matter. Add to this the question of motive. You admit that you know of no one who could have a motive and that there could be no cause for enmity toward the victim. What motive would there be, then?"

"I know of none, nor of any one who could want to kill my father, unless perhaps a maniac."

"But this man was not a maniac, not by any means," Kadinger mildly objected. "No; men do not plan crimes so elaborately without some highly good reason. This man must have had some specific and very particular motive for wanting the attorney out of the way. Mania was not his incentive. He did not come here goaded by the desire for revenge, with the hot-headed determination to wreak it at any cost. He was playing some high-handed game, which must have meant a fearful loss to him if it failed. Would you not at least surmise that this clever frame-up against you reflected some great need of protecting himself from suspicion? Would not this urgent need tell you that he was in some delicate position where even the merest suspicion might upset his calculations—his plans?"

"Yes, it would," the girl admitted in an awe-struck tone. "Now, I understand that your father had a generally wide reputation for cleverness."

"Yes, he had the reputation," but I fear it was not as well founded as yours, else—

"No flattery, please. Your father's professional cleverness was exercised at the bar. If he was clever and whimsical away from the bar, it was rather amateurishly, which is no disparagement to the deceased. Now my professional skill must be brought to bear upon incidents which had no bearing on your father's profession. That is why you have the impression that I am more astute than your father. Had you attended the courts where he acted as prosecuting attorney you would doubtless have been as much astounded by his ability to find out things as you are lately by mine. Now, imagine yourself a defendant on the stand. Suppose your case is a desperate one, that it has been hotly contested with evidence well balanced in favor of the plaintiff and the defendant. But suppose that the attorney who is about to make his plea against you is an unusually astute man and you are well aware that no other would have as much influence on the decision of the court as this man will have if he is allowed to speak. Does not this appeal to you as a plausible motive?"

The girl nodded, pensively. "Yes, I suppose so," she sighed.

"Ah, you are growing weary, and little wonder. But we shall soon have concluded the investigation."

"But I do not wish it ended until this man is in our hands and the guilt placed on him," said the girl, rousing herself. "Go on. Do you think I could get rest until then?"

"Then suppose you inform me who the man was that your father expected to send up the road when these two non-session days intervened."

"Herbert Wimble. Is he the man who did it, then? Tell me!"

"Did you ever see him?"

"Never."

"Did you ever see a photo of him?"

"Yes; but a very poor one. It only gave his face, and that was rather blurred, as is often the case, you know, with news prints. Besides, it was long ago, and I do not remember it. I doubt if I could have recognized any likeness or difference between that picture and Klyne's face if I had looked at both at the same time."

"Notwithstanding, I think we may be fairly certain that he, or some person intimately associated with him, is the man. From what I know of him, he is the sort of person who would be likely to do this thing. He is up for third degree as it is. Moreover, his trial is just such as I have described to you."

"Then how are you going to find out who it is?"

"I have a plan. Whoever it was had a good reason for wanting your father out of the way. Suppose we put an equally clever man in his place. Then may we not suppose he would try to get this person out of the way, too?"

"But who?"

"Myself, of course. I am as near your father's build and features as any one in Los Angeles. Whether this person detects my disguise or not, he'll find he has a skillful lawyer to deal with."

"But you must risk your life to—to—well, just to revenge a murder."

"I assure you there will be no risk, my girl. No man has had a chance to get a fair aim at me yet."

"But you mustn't. This man is different. I feared he had killed you at your office, when I heard that shot; and now you insist on actually putting yourself in his power."

"In putting him in our power, rather," Kadinger insisted gently. "Now, I'd advise you to try to get some rest. You look about all in. I intend to spend the rest of the night getting ready."

In the early morning Ruth saw a figure emerge from her father's study into the hall. "Father!" she gasped, and started to run toward him, then checked herself.

"Sorry, Ruth, but I'm not your father. This bandage and this outfit are merely subterfuge."

"But—but you have my father's voice and walk—everything. Do you mean to tell me—? Am I dreaming?"

"No, I think not," said the man, in a slightly altered voice.

"Oh, it is only you, Mr. Kadinger," sighed Ruth.

The prosecuting attorney made his appearance at Judge Chambers' court in good time, and with a glance over the court and the spectators, he took his accustomed chair. Everything seemed to be going as it should. Then the prisoner was brought in and seated. He seemed to be at once curiously interested in the attorney. Was it the bandage? the latter wondered. He wished he had left it off, for then if Wimble had been surprised he could be certain that he was aware of the murder.

Then the attorney made a sudden decision. He got up, walked straight to the prisoner, and took from a pocket of his coat a small, short-barreled pistol.

"Ever see this before, Mr. Wimble?" he asked suddenly, thrusting the object directly before the defendant's eyes. The latter gave a hoarse cry of astonishment and then suddenly seized the pistol by the butt, wrenched the barrel from the attorney's grasp, and fired point-blank. But Kadinger still stood smiling at him, and enjoying his consternation.

"You're beaten, Wimble. Your game's up," he said.

"There are only blanks in the gun. You know you had only one B. B. shot, and I have that in my pocket."

Suddenly, before the police guard or the detective could interfere, the prisoner thrust a B. B. shot in the gun, put the muzzle against his own temple and pulled the trigger. Thus he died, much as did his victim, by means of a blank cartridge, and a little B. B. shot.

One of the best poker stories ever written will be published in No. 23, out in two weeks.

SPICIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your semi-monthly copy of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this magazine every two weeks, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

AT THE PINK ORCHID

By BEULAH POYNTER

"A H, these raids make me sick!" growled Big Ben, as he flipped a wet towel across the bar. The man facing him grunted, but as he lighted a cigarette he leaned over toward the huge bartender and, squinting knowingly, said:

"Well, you better can any rough stuff. The bulls have got their eyes on every road-house in this locality and, take it from me, the Pink Orchid ain't goin' to get no better deal than any other joint on the road, if they got anything on you."

Ben flicked an imaginary fly off a beer mug before he replied.

"They can't get anything on us. We don't sell liquor to soldiers, and the place is run straight."

A noisy burst of laughter from one of the inner dining-rooms followed by a cry of "Waiter! Waiter!" caused the conversation to cease abruptly.

"I'm comin', hold your horses!" growled Ben, as he slumped out of the barroom and into the hallway which led to the private dining-rooms, as well as to the stairway and the rooms above.

The man leaning against the bar chuckled, and, pulling his cap down over his ears he buttoned up his great-coat and sauntered out of the room into the cold, snowy night outside.

The "Pink Orchid" belied its name. It was a sordid, dismal-looking wayside inn, with little to recommend it to belated travelers or roistering pleasure-seekers. The bar-room and office were combined and, aside from two small private dining rooms at the rear of the building, the one room was used to both serve liquor and food in. A small cracked stove in the centre, heated to bursting point, glowed red and gave the appearance of warmth. There were two small tables with oilcloth covers on either side of the room; one with the remainder of a meal on its soiled top. The sleeping-rooms on the floor above were rarely used by guests, but gave the place its claim to be called a hotel, though liquor-selling was the real reason of its existence.

The party Big Ben was called upon to attend was a gang of young roustabouts (already the worse for numerous highballs) that had driven up before the snowstorm had begun. They were laughing merrily, and making, generally, so much noise that not until he returned to the bar-room did Ben realize another party had arrived at the Pink Orchid.

The second party consisted of two young men and two girls. One of the latter exceedingly young, pretty and timid. The other girl, in direct contrast to her, was large, bold, good-looking but in a brazen way, and several years her senior. The small girl was dressed in a plain dark suit, which just escaped being shabby but did not detract in any way from her flower-like loveliness. The older girl was dressed in keeping with her personality, vivid, bizarre, gorgeous, but rich.

The two men were typical of the variety known as rouders, young, dissipated-looking but well groomed. One had the ear-marks of the all-around "sport," while the

other was obviously the black sheep of a good family. The small mouse-like girl dropped in a chair near one of the tables, and with hands that shook with excitement removed a small fur-piece from her shoulders. The other girl sauntered over to the bar, and leaning against it demanded a cigarette of her male companions. She lighted it, blowing rings of smoke into the air.

"Some joint!" she snickered. "The Pink Orchid! Gawd save the mark! Take off your coat, Alice, you won't feel it when you go out if you don't."

"I'm cold," replied Alice, shivering perceptibly. "I got all chilled through driving here."

"So did I," said the younger, more quietly dressed man. "I'm not sorry to stop here for a moment and have a drink."

"Drink?" said Alice.

"Sure, Cutie," laughed the other woman. "What d'ye think this is, a florist shop?"

"I—I—don't drink," Alice faltered.

"Didn't I tell you!" ejaculated the woman. "She's a kill-joy in any party—though you would have her along!"

"Shush!" admonished the man.

"Shush yourself! When she wafted into the chorus last week I said to myself, 'Sunday-school teacher lost her way!' and I laughed myself sick when she stayed; then you came along with your dough and your buzz wagon—and fell for her hard! That handed me another jolt!"

The man scowled; although the girl moved uneasily and extended her hands toward the stove, she did not seem to hear the other woman's words.

"Aw, can that line of talk, Sophie," said the sporty-looking man. "Bruce don't care to listen to your dope on the kid. He's stuck on her, and that's his affair. She's a cute little trick, anyway."

"Oh, she's cute, all right," sneered the woman; "too cute for either you or Bruce. Bruce's coin means nothing to her, she believes in love. Love! Bah! Say, where's that fool waiter, I want something to drink!"

Big Ben entering the room caught her last remark. Taking in the group at a glance, he stepped behind the bar to await their orders.

The girl by the stove did not look up as he entered. She appeared drowsy in the warm room after the cold outside and seemed oblivious to her surroundings.

The woman called Sophie ordered a cocktail and passed a few uncomplimentary remarks about the place as she did so. But Ben only laughed good-naturedly.

"Run right, ain't it? and my engine has stalled out there in the snow. I want to get warmed up before I try to fix it," vouchsafed Bruce.

The bartender served them, setting a cocktail in front of Alice. She glanced at it in surprise, tasted it with a puckery face; but when Sophie laughed at her she drank it at a swallow.

"Say, Marvin, be a good scout and take a look at the engine for me, won't you?" said Bruce.

The two men exchanged glances fraught with meaning, and Marvin replied glibly:

"Sure! Come, Soph, you can superintend the job." She started to protest, when he pulled her towards him, and in an almost inaudible whisper said, "Ain't you hep? It's the game. Come on!"

"Oh," she muttered. She cast a backward glance at the pretty, quiet girl by the stove—at the debonair but dissipated man beside the bar—hesitated a moment, then laughed discordantly.

"Come along," she said. And pulling her furs about her full figure she followed the man Marvin from the room.

"Bad thing to get stalled on a night like this," said Ben solicitously.

"Yes," answered Bruce. He crossed to the girl, and pulling out the chair opposite her, seated himself and quietly possessed one of her hands. She struggled faintly to withdraw it, but his grip did not relax.

"Please," she said. "I'd rather you didn't."

"I'm mad about you," he whispered. "Simply crazy. Why do you hold me at arm's length this way?"

The girl raised her wide blue eyes and stared at him in bewilderment. He laughed.

"You innocent! Don't pretend you don't know it! Haven't I been to your rotten little show every night since you joined it? Haven't I tried every way to be alone with you? But you evade me—why? Don't you like me?"

She nodded her head in assent and he leaned closer.

"God! You're pretty!" he muttered. "The prettiest thing I've ever seen. I'd like to hold you until you cried for mercy!"

She drew back in dismay. "You've been drinking!" she cried.

"Sure; so have you," he answered, pointing to the empty cocktail glass. She flushed painfully.

A noisy call of "Waiter! Waiter!" from a private room took Ben out of the barroom, and without his presence, Bruce cast all restraint to the winds. Springing from his chair, he caught the girl in his arms, kissing her passionately, holding her in a tight embrace, although she struggled in his arms, sobbing incoherently to be released. "You'll not regret it," he said again and again. "I love you—yes, I do, and there'll not be a thing you want you can't have, you beauty!"

She relaxed and lay quietly in his arms. A complete silence invaded the room. One of those silences which so often follow a noisy outburst—and precede one. The sudden sound of an automobile broke the silence. The man stiffened and drew his breath through his teeth with a hissing sound, simultaneously his arms fell from the girl, and she dropped sobbing into the nearest chair.

He ran to the window, and as he peered out he gave a cry. "Great guns! They're gone! Marvin and Sophie have taken the car!"

"Wha—at?" said the girl in a dazed manner.

"They've taken our car! Left us! Ditched us flat!"

"No!" she cried, springing to her feet. "No!"

"Yes. Didn't you hear that? It was my car and they were in it!"

"Oh!" she wailed. "What'll we do? We can take a train, can't we?"

The man studied. "I wonder; I'll ask the waiter. There ought to be a train back to New York to-night."

He met Ben in the hall. The waiter looked at him quizzically and Bruce seemed to have difficulty in addressing him.

"My friends have left us, taken the machine, I mean, and—I—" he stammered.

"Sure, I seen 'em go," said Ben. "You can get a train in half an hour. Station's only a block away."

The young man's eyes narrowed. He coughed, then reaching in his pocket drew out a yellow bill which he

crumpled into a ball. He stared intently at the bartender, and Ben met his glance unflinchingly. When he extended the bill he said harshly:

"There's no train until morning, understand? No train until morning."

"I getcha," said Ben, pocketing the bill.

"I'm sorry," said Bruce when he returned to the girl, "but we'll have to stay here to-night; there's not another train until morning."

She grew white, her hands twitched nervously. "Not until morning?" she repeated after him. "It can't be—why—why, I'd be away all night! What would mother say? I'd be here with you; it isn't proper! I—oh, I've got to get home, somehow." She became frantic, and clung to him, begging him to take her home.

"There, there, kiddie," he whispered; "it's all right. Sure, it's all right. Don't cry! We've got to make the best of a bad bargain. I didn't dream such a thing as this would happen, but don't you worry. There, there!"

But she broke away from him and, running to Ben, demanded if it were true that there were no trains until morning. There was a strange glint in Ben's blue eyes when he replied, "Yes."

Bruce led her to the chair again, then turning to the bar he registered "Alec Bruce and wife, New York."

Ben coughed, but taking a key from the rack behind him said, "I dunno—but—well, come along—"

"Where?" gasped Alice.

"It's late," said Bruce. "A little rest will make you feel better. In the morning you'll see it all in a different light."

The girl gave a cry of terror as she grasped the situation. "I'm not going with you!" she cried. "Take your hands off of me! I'll walk home first! I'll walk if I die for it!"

The man's tenderness dropped from him like a cloak; catching her by the shoulders with a grip of steel, he snarled:

"Now—cut it! It's cost me an even five hundred to get you here and, by God! I'm going to keep you! You can have everything you want if you're nice and behave yourself. I keep my word, but you're not going back to town to-night."

She tried to cry out and struggle from his embrace, but he held her like a vise, his hand over her mouth.

"I wouldn't be too certain of it if I were you," said a quiet voice behind him. Wheeling about quickly he faced the barrel of an automatic held by the bartender, Ben.

"Say—what's the idea?" he gasped.

"You get me," said Ben. He smiled, but there was menace in his voice. "The Pink Orchid's run straight, see! There's your measly hundred! D'ye think you can pull the white-slave stuff for a hundred bones and get away with it? Not while your Uncle Dudley's on the job! Loosen up before I make you."

The man's arms fell to his side, while Alice, sobbing, ran to the bartender's side, who continued speaking in the same old voice:

"While you were putting up your proposition to the kid here I was telephoning—"

"What!" gasped Bruce.

"To a preacher; and he's on his way here with a certificate and a license!"

"What—with a what?" The incredulity in his voice made Ben laugh.

"You're goin' to marry this dame," he said. "You're goin' to be tied to her just as tight as a preacher and a Bible can make you. Thought you'd compromise her, use her as a plaything, then throw her over, did you, Mr. Millionaire's son? Well, it can't be did—not in these war

times. Oh, sit down, take it easy or you'll wilt your collar, and a bridegroom ought to be immaculate!"

Young Bruce stared at him in amazement. Great beads of perspiration stood out on his brow; he tried to protest, but the gleam of the revolver leveled so steadily at him acted as a silencer. The girl gasped, she seemed suddenly to realize the situation, and her face glowed with happiness.

"Oh, Alec! Are you going to marry me?" she gasped. "You intended to, all the time, didn't you, and the other was just a bad dream, wasn't it?"

"Sure!" said Ben; "just a bad dream, but this is a worse one for his nibs there."

"Shut up!" snarled the trapped man.

After some little time, for most part spent in silence, a stranger appeared in the doorway. There was no question as to his identity, for everything about him proclaimed him a minister of the gospel. If Bruce had had any hopes of evading the issue his appearance would have dashed them to the ground. The preacher looked at the strange group in astonishment. The bartender, covering the infuriated gentleman with a gun, and the pretty girl so obviously ill at ease.

"Are—are these the persons—I—er—am to join in wedding?" he stammered.

"Yep," said Ben. "Stand up, Mr. Bridegroom."

Bruce rose reluctantly, and Alice joined him.

"Don't look like that," she pleaded. "I'll be a good wife to you, honestly I will."

He grunted in distaste. The minister drew his Bible and papers from his pocket, coughed and requested them to join hands. The hand that grasped Alice's was cold as ice and she shivered, but she went through the ceremony bravely. Never once did Ben lower his automatic until the final "Yes" was said and the minister pronounced them man and wife, then with a sigh of relief, he tossed it in the corner, saying as he did so:

"The fool thing wasn't loaded, anyhow."

Alice gave a surprising giggle and, withdrawing her hand from her newly-made husband's, ran to the big bartender, throwing her arms about him, laughing hysterically as she hugged him.

"You dear! You old dear!"

"Sa—ay—" muttered Bruce, his face expressing embarrassment, chagrin and curiosity.

"He's my brother," said the girl. "Bennie Worth, meet my husband!"

Then suddenly the minister, the bartender and the girl burst into hilarious laughter, which ended abruptly when the girl approached her bridegroom and, drawing herself up with a new-found dignity, totally at variance with her former timidity, addressed him in icy tones which caused him to shrink back.

"Now, listen, you poor excuse for a man, you thought you could trap me here, as you've done a dozen other girls, no doubt, who wouldn't fall for your position and your money! You thought you could hire some of the members of my company to help you ruin me—for a few measly dollars! Well, I looked innocent, all right, but you're a bigger boob than I am, because I put it over on you! I'm not married to you, because I'd die sooner than have a man like you for a husband—"

"Not married—"

"Take off the disguise, Jimmy," she said to the minister. "No, he's a fake—just as you are, but he could have been the real thing, and it would have been good-night for you!"

As the preacher removed his beard he revealed the companion who had been with them earlier in the evening, minus his flashy manner, and Bruce drew back at the concentrated anger in his face.

"Beat it!" said the erstwhile preacher. "Your punk joy wagon is still outside—and thank your lucky stars we ain't the real thing, or you'd be in for the biggest alimony on record. I hope you've had a good scare, Mr. Rich Man; if you haven't, some one will use your head as a target one of these days. They're not all as soft as Alice, clever as she is."

Amidst their gales of laughter, young Bruce made a hasty exit. As the door slammed after him, the man Jimmy took Alice in his arms.

"Say!" cried Ben.

"We're going to be married," she laughed. "Jimmy is our kind, Ben."

"A Romance of the Morgue" is the title of a fine story to appear on our next number.

STUDY MADE OF SOLDIERS' FEET

THE War Department authorizes the following:

A series of studies of soldiers' feet and the proper fitting of shoes has just been completed by a staff of officers, enlisted men, expert shoe men, and military orthopedists under the direction of the Quartermaster General and the Surgeon General. The experiments and tests, which covered a period of many months and a number of camps and cantonments, were thorough and complete and resulted in changes and improvements that will mean added comfort and marching power to the Army.

In several camps entire regiments have their feet measured and hundreds of drawings were made of oddly shaped or sized feet. One soldier was found to have feet measuring 13 inches long and 5 inches wide. Two out of every thousand men have had to have their shoes made to order. Heretofore there has been but one general type of Army shoe which has been used for all purposes. The size most in demand of this standard shoe was 7E. As a result of the special tests it was found that two styles are necessary; one, a field shoe and the other a marching shoe. The average size of the marching shoe is 8 1-2D, while the average size of the field shoe is 9E. The

marching shoe is somewhat lighter and softer than the field shoe. Larger size shoes are needed in the trenches as the men wear heavier or an extra pair of socks, which explains the difference in the average sizes of the field and marching shoes.

Men coming into the camps are surprised to find that their civilian shoes are too small and that marching has caused their feet to fill out. In many cases shoes several sizes larger than those worn in civilian life are needed after several weeks of training. Facts brought out in the tests seem to prove that the men in the present Army are larger than those serving in previous wars. Not only is this shown by the larger sizes of shoes called for, but by the larger sizes of outer clothing that is being required. Records in the Quartermaster General's office show that a size larger, on the average, is being called for in blouses, shirts, and breeches than have ever before been used. The average size in shoes and outer clothing is determined after a complete survey of all the records of previous warring nations.

The Army uses up at the present time between two and three million pairs of shoes a month.

CALLING THE BLUEBELLS

BY W. H. NEALL

THEY were a delightful young married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Bluebell, and had resided in the quiet little village just about two weeks.

As yet, they had not cultivated the neighbors, although the neighbors had religiously tried to cultivate them—Mrs. Causely especially. Her lawn adjoined that of the Bluebells, and she felt it her duty to be sociable like.

Her laudable desire had a threefold object in it, too: she wanted to know who they were, what they were, and everything else worth knowing about them.

For Mrs. Causely was something of a gossip, to state it plainly, and the villagers looked to her for information on all important topics. The good woman did not wish to be considered inquisitive, far from it; merely "motherly," that was all. On the morning of the young couple's arrival Mrs. Causely had leaned over the fence, and seeing Mrs. Bluebell flitting in and out of the house like a happy bird, called to her. Obediently Mrs. Bluebell came to the fence and Mrs. Causely proceeded to be neighborly at once.

"Haden't I better come over and show you how to regulate that range?" said she. "Mrs. Van Roden"—the previous occupant of the house—"had a terrible time with it till I showed her how. Then the valve of the pump gets out of kilter sometimes. I'll just run in and show you how to fix it. I reckon that you'd better let me help you set your things to rights. You're young at it, you know."

But to all these proffers of aid pretty Mrs. Bluebell shook her head and answered:

"No, thanks! Bert and I can manage very nicely."

"Stuck up thing!" Mrs. Causely muttered as she went back to her kitchen. "Likely as not they're afraid that I'll find out some of their family secrets. I'll just keep my eyes and ears open."

And she did.

But spy all she could, Mrs. Causely knew no more of the Bluebell family than she did the first day they took the cozy village house.

Every morning Mr. Bluebell kissed his wife at the door and stepped lively away towards the station, gaily waving his hand until out of sight; and every evening, upon his return from his business in the city, the little pink and white blossom of womanhood met him at the gate, and more kisses.

"Soft as butter!" growled Mrs. Causely through the blinds. "They're not as good as they make believe to be."

But she was mistaken, for on the two Sundays they had resided in the place both had attended church, and had even intimated that in the near future they would probably connect themselves with it. This was good news to the Reverend Mr. Bingie, for his flock was not any too large, and as Mrs. Bluebell was a capital singer, she would greatly augment the choir.

On the second Sunday of the advent of the young couple the Reverend Bingie had delivered a stirring sermon on "The Sins of the World," laying particular stress upon gambling.

He had evidently studied Hoyle's book of games, as well

as several others thoroughly, for he seemed to have the names of the various kinds of hazard down to a dot.

Faro was dwelt upon and torn into pieces.

Dice was described as the lodestones of the devil.

Billiards and pool as the royal road to hades.

Even poor old maidish croquet was treated to a scorching.

Euchre was placed in the category of fashionable evils leading by easy stages to degeneration and disgrace.

A man who played poker was lost forever. His children were neglected; his wife abused; his money wasted, and ruin, poverty and death stared him in the face.

At this peculiar and extraordinary mode of using the sanctuary, Mr. Bluebell turned towards his wife, elevated his eyebrows and smiled his surprise.

Mrs. Bluebell slightly pursed her pretty lips, a sign that plainly said:

"Very much out of place."

All this little by-play Mrs. Causely saw and stored it up for future reference.

How she could use it she did not know, but she had always made it a point not to let the least thing escape her.

On the following Wednesday the opportunity of her life came; an opportunity for which she had long waited; the smiling, innocent-appearing young couple was to be unmasked.

As usual, Mrs. Causely was looking and listening through the blinds.

Mr. Bluebell had kissed his wife as of yore, and was swinging down the lane when Mrs. Bluebell bethought of something and flew down to the gate, calling:

"Bert! Bert! Oh, Bert!"

He stopped and turned around, inclining his head to catch her words.

"Don't forget the poker to-night!" she cried; "and be sure to bring the chips and the money for Kittie."

He nodded his head and went on.

Poker! That one word struck Mrs. Causely with stunning force.

Poker, the fire and brimstone pit—poker, which the Reverend Bingie had particularly warned his people against.

"Oh, you deceitful persons!" groaned Mrs. Causely from the depth of her heart. "I saw your sly winking and smiling in church last Sunday; Mr. Bingie shall be warned of this; he shall know what kind of people he has to deal with—poker players, indeed!"

She bustled into the dining-room.

A smell of tobacco smoke that floated in through the open window assailed her nostrils.

"Ah, there is Jack!" she thought.

"He is a city boy and likely knows something of this dreadful game of poker. And I ought to know something of its evils also. Mr. Bingie didn't go into particulars. How could he?"

Jack Brown was a city boy, true enough; spending his college vacation at his aunt's.

Jack had been introduced to several poker games at

college, and he was so fascinated with the acquaintance-ship that the wee small hours came only too soon.

"Jack!" called Mrs. Causely. "Put out that nasty pipe and come here; I want to ask you some important questions."

The nephew carefully knocked out the ashes from his meerschbaum bowl and presented himself before his aunt.

"Jack," said she severely, "do you play poker?"

"I do not!" he answered firmly, as well as truthfully.

"I thought that you were not guilty of such an unpardonable sin," said she, "but—but—do you know how the game is played?"

"Yes, auntie, I must confess that I have seen quite a number try to play it."

"And it's a shocking game, isn't it? Just runs away with the money, doesn't it?"

"Well, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, and sometimes, at the end of the evening, you come out even. You never know until you cash in your chips."

"Chips!"

"Yes; they are a part of the paraphernalia. First you buy a stack of chips, you know—white ones, red ones and blue ones."

"Chips!"

"That's what I said; I—"

"That's what she said, too. Oh, Jack, the sweet-faced daughter of Satan!"

Jack gazed at his aunt in wonder.

"She said what?" he finally asked. "And who is 'she,' and what makes you call her a 'daughter of Satan?'"

"Oh, never mind Jack, never mind! Go on, go on; I'm so agitated!"

"You certainly are rather flustered, auntie. Well, after the chips are all arranged before you, then the cards are dealt out. Next you begin to bet—ante, raise, call and show up, understand?"

"No, I don't understand at all," she replied. "But I know that a powerful lot of money is lost by it all; it's dreadful, dreadful! One man wins it all, I suppose, and the others are left penniless."

"Well, I don't know about one fellow raking in all the boodle, though the cold-blooded, nerry player generally does, unless there's a 'kittie.'"

"A 'kittie!'"

"Yes; in that event the 'kittie' comes in for a share of the profits; at the end of a season's play the 'kittie' is the best man by far."

"The 'kittie!' Oh, Jack, she said that also! He was to bring money for the 'kittie.' This is terrible, terrible!"

"Who said it, and who is to bring money?" demanded Jack, really getting vexed at his aunt's queer manner of speaking.

"Oh, I'm too disturbed to tell you now!" she replied. "I must go over and see Mrs. Trumpeter."

With that she snatched up a sunbonnet and flew across the street to one of her old cronies.

In a few minutes the whole matter was laid before that lady, and Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell, Jack Brown, poker, chips and "kittie" were mixed up promiscuously.

The animated conversation ended by both ladies emerging from the house—Mrs. Trumpeter going in one direction, and Mrs. Causely in another, so that by noon Mrs. Priest knew that "Mr. Bluebell carried on a gambling house, and had joined the church to entice the youth of the village."

Mrs. Gardiner was informed that "Jack Brown had lost all his money in Mr. Bluebell's house, and that Jack's father had sworn out a warrant for the arrest of the gambler."

Mrs. Perkins was led to understand that "the police had

raided Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell's house, and that Jack Brown had been poisoned by a 'kittie'—a deadly drug that gamblers use."

Wherever the story went it was added to, distorted and redressed until the small village was in a ferment.

The Reverend Mr. Bingle was appealed to.

He immediately summoned the official members of his church and a plan of action agreed upon.

It was arranged that the minister, the official members and Mrs. Causely, the accuser, should call in a body that very evening upon Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell and endeavor to turn them from the error of their ways.

In blest ignorance of what was in store for them, the young couple contentedly sat in their snug little library—she sewing, and he reading aloud the evening paper.

Outside of the house a great crowd had congregated, and when the Reverend Bingle, supported by an appointed committee, rang the bell a solemn hush fell upon the multitude.

The door was opened by a rosy-faced Irish girl, and Mr. Bingle, clearing his throat, asked:

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell at home?"

"They be, sur," was the answer. "An' in the li-bo-rary, 'sur."

With pious mien the self-appointed censors filed in.

The young couple arose and Mr. Bluebell advanced, offering his hand, while Mrs. Bluebell, with womanly instinct, mistrusted that they were about to be made the recipients of a surprise party, and mentally bemoaned their fate.

The husband shook hands all around and invited his visitors to be seated.

They all found chairs with the exception of the Reverend Mr. Bingle, who, as spokesman, remained standing. It was an embarrassing situation, but the minister had nerved himself for the ordeal.

With a preliminary throat clearing, he began:

"Brother Bluebell—I call you 'brother' for I understand that in the near future you intend making application for admittance into our flock—Brother Bluebell, can a wolf enter the fold of the lambs without the lambs suffering?"

Mr. Bluebell thought not and Mrs. Bluebell looked frightened.

"Brother Bluebell, he who makes religion a cloak to cover a nefarious business is a detriment to a community."

Mr. Bluebell again agreed but began to look annoyed, while his wife nervously toyed with a paper-cutter.

"Brother," went on the Reverend Mr. Bingle relentlessly, "you and your wife were at church last Sunday and heard my sermon. A powerful sermon, sir—a sermon that ought to turn people from paths of vice and corruption."

"It was a powerful sermon, Mr. Bingle," said Mr. Bluebell. "And I indorse most everything in it!"

"You do? Ah! the deceit of man. Beware, sir, beware; the pit is before you! You and your wife are standing on its brink."

Mr. Bluebell began to get angry, and Mrs. Bluebell showed signs of great alarm, while Mrs. Causely was seen to apply her handkerchief several times to her eyes.

"Please explain, sir," said the young husband with dignity. "I fail to catch the drift of your conversation. It is an enigma to me."

"I will be brief, brother. It has come to my ears that you and your wife are slaves—yes, slaves to a hellish game."

The young couple's eyes were wide open with amazement.

"A game! What game?" queried Mr. Bluebell.

"What game? Ah, the brazenness of it!"

And the Reverend Mr. Bingle rolled his eyes.

"What game? Poker, brother, poker! Poker that smells of fire and brimstone; that steals the pocketbook and sears the soul."

Mrs. Causely wept audibly.

Mr. Bluebell glanced at his wife with a peculiar smile and she seemed reassured.

"So I and my wife are accused of being slaves to poker, eh?" said the young man, reflectively scratching his chin.

"Who brings the charge?"

"Brother Bluebell, it is my painful duty to inform you that Sister Causely, your neighbor, has undisputable evidence."

Mrs. Causely nodded her head in a sorrowful (?) fashion.

"This morning," continued Mr. Bingle, "she overheard your conversation relating to this evening. I will repeat it word for word, although I defile my tongue by so doing. Your wife uttered the words, sir."

Straightway Mrs. Bluebell became agitated again.

"Ah, sister, you may well tremble, for those words have brought censure and disgrace upon you both!"

"What were they, sir? This farce is lasting entirely too long," began the young husband, much nettled.

"Patience, brother, patience," and the minister sighed and then in a doleful voice continued:

"When you were halfway down the street this morning your wife called after you. Do you remember that?"

Mr. Bluebell inclined his head.

"Her words, as I got them from Sister Causely, were: 'Don't forget the poker to-night! Do you remember them, brother?'"

A great light suddenly broke over the intellect of Mr. Bluebell, and Mrs. Bluebell was positively radiant.

"Why, yes, I do remember Nan saying that," replied the husband; "you did, didn't you, dear?"

"I certainly did," she replied, concealing her face in her handkerchief to prevent laughing outright.

"You do not deny it, then?" went on Mr. Bingle impressively. "Ah, sister, shed tears; thy sins have found thee out. Now, brother, your wife followed up that request by another; it was: 'And be sure to bring the chips!' Am I right?"

"Perfectly!"

"And you admit that, too; admit being asked to bring the chips? Chips, the devil's playthings—the base implements of the game! And did you obey your wife's instructions?"

"I did."

The Reverend Bingle could not find words to express his horror.

After recovering somewhat from Mr. Bluebell's admission, he proceeded to the third and last charge in the accusation.

"Now, brother, there is one more and I am finished. Did—did you bring the money for the 'kittie'?—the most debasing thing of the whole transaction."

"I did not forget it," answered Mr. Bluebell.

His eyes twinkled and the corners of his mouth twitched with an irrepressible desire to laugh.

The Reverend Bingle and the rest of the committee groaned.

The young husband now took the floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "while I thank you exceedingly for your interest in my wife and myself, and appreciate the trouble that you have taken to bring us back to the paths of rectitude, nevertheless people can make grand mistakes—inquisitive people especially."

This was a direct shot at Mrs. Causely, and she bristled accordingly.

"Now, while I admit that my wife did remind me of the poker, the chips and the 'kittie,' as you say, yet I will state that Mrs. Bluebell and myself never played a game of poker in our lives, and, in fact, never intend to! I will go farther—I have never seen a poker game played."

"Or I, either," broke in Mrs. Bluebell.

A look of incredulity went around the room, and Mrs. Causely gave a decided sniff.

"To show you how easily one may be mistaken," Mr. Bluebell continued, "I will give you ocular proof; excuse me for just a moment."

He left the room but returned almost immediately, accompanied by the plump-looking servant girl, who bore a platter.

"Now," said he, turning to the girl, "what I am about to ask you may appear a trifle singular, yet I want you to answer me without question. Will you please tell me how you rake the kitchen fire?"

"Phy, wid a poker, sur, to be sure!"

"Good; and how did you rake it this morning?"

"Wid a sthick, sur; there wasn't any poker in the house till yez brought wan home the night, sur."

"Of course; and here it is," said Mr. Bluebell, opening his coat and exposing to view a brand new iron poker.

Mr. Bingle and the committee exchanged glances.

"Now, please," Mr. Bluebell went on, again turning to the girl, "kindly tell me what you have on that plate."

"Phy, they be chips, sur, potato chips. The missis told yez to bring them, sur—phwat a funny question."

The committee arose, and Mr. Bingle himself was busy clearing his throat.

Mrs. Causely, as red as a lobster, eyed the door.

"Now tell me your name, please," said Mr. Bluebell, still addressing the girl.

"Me name, is it? Phy, yez know it is Kittie Mullen, sur!"

"Thank you, Kittie; that will do. Please take the poker and platter back to the kitchen."

Mr. Bluebell now turned to the discomfited people before him.

"To-morrow will be Kittie's day out. My wife was fearful that I would forget Kittie's wages; she was merely reminding me this morning, that is all."

Dumbfounded, covered with confusion, and heartily ashamed of the whole affair, Mr. Bingle and the committee stood staring at the young couple.

All but Mrs. Causely; she was having a private case of hysterics in the corner.

Not a word did the Reverend Bingle say. What could he say?

Slowly, and in deep humility, the minister and the committee strode out of the house supporting one crushed female between them.

What their feelings must have been can only be imagined, and what disconcerted them all the more were the peals after peals of laughter that came from behind the closed door.

How the committee explained it all to the waiting throng is another story.

Jack Brown was so overcome with the absurdity of the thing that he fell off of the limb of a tree, on which he was roosting, and broke his beloved pipe.

Poker, chips and "Kittie" were too much for Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell, and they never attended the Reverend Bingle's church again. It would have been impossible for them to have kept their faces straight during the services.

WHAT'S IN A HAND?

By JESSIE JULIET KNOX

WHY it should be I do not know. I only know that it is, and that even so great a sage as Aristotle acknowledged the human hand to be the most important index to character. It is an absolute fact that every deep experience of life writes itself on the human hand, to be read by the understanding ones.

People who laugh sarcastically, and say, "I do not believe in such things," only display their ignorance, and the fact that they are mentally too indolent to delve into the truth of themselves. Let them at least study into chiromancy enough to give it a fair trial before pronouncing judgment.

Palmistry is a big subject, but one well worth studying, for one's own benefit, as well as the benefit and pleasure it may bring to others. This is an age when people are much interested in the truths which lie back of the appearance, and palmistry is coming to the front.

To learn this art one can begin by taking his own hand, and the hands of friends and relatives, studying first the mounts, and then proceeding into the more intricate combinations of lines and markings. For instance a narrow, skinny hand would indicate that the owner had not as yet developed the positive side of his nature, but was timid and shrinking, and always liked to have some one else go forward and do the unpleasant things in life for him. This may also give a rather artistic tendency. Long, smooth fingers may indicate love of detail, poetry, music, and creative genius.

Strange as it may seem, fingers with knotty joints show an orderly and executive nature. A woman with such joints would be without doubt a very neat housekeeper, and not always pleasant to live with, if the joints are quite large. The enlarged upper joint of the finger would indicate an orderly and systematic mind, also philosophy and reason. A knotted lower joint also would bring success in business affairs, the ability to make money, and to become a success in the world of finance.

The short-fingered person is full of impulse and intuition, and is always getting "hunches" about things. If the fingers are very short and fat the nature would be sensual, and often high-tempered. They are not so apt to take the trouble to probe and delve into the inner meaning of things as the long, slender fingers, however.

Large hands will pay attention to the minutest details, while the small hand will sometimes do colossal things and sweep everything before it.

When you see fingers thick at the base you may rest assured that the party is what may be called "a good fellow," and likes to eat. If the spaces between the lower part of the fingers be wide, he would be a good friend with whom to dine, for he would be generous as well as a judge of cookery. There is always a touch of Bohemianism in such fingers, but they are always big-hearted and good to meet. If a person with such fingers asks you out to dine, accept, by all means, for you are sure to have a jolly time.

Fleshy pads at the ends of the fingers betoken sensi-

tiveness and quick temper. Fingers broad at the tips mean an active nature; one fond, too, of the out-of-doors; also philosophy, and very often a brilliant musician.

Cone-shaped fingers are always artistic, and if the top of the index finger turns inward you will find a psychic tendency, and a desire to delve into higher lines of thought.

A person with a soft, cottony hand is indolent by nature, also super-sensitive, and a lover of luxury.

Hard palms denote a tease, and also selfishness, but very often evidence the hard work that has been done by the owner of the hand. An artist with hard palms would be apt to paint battle scenes, and the hard and unpleasant side of life. One with soft palms would depict tender love scenes, and such pictures as the Madonna and Child.

Hard-handed people, however, are more apt to be faithful in their loves, while the soft, satiny palm, with delicate lines, testifies of fickleness.

Beware of the hand that is always kept closed, for this denotes lying and secretiveness.

This is part of the psychology used by officials when testing criminals.

Few would think to look for character in the finger-nails, but it is to be found, even there. Fine, delicate nails reveal the noble, sensitive and artistic nature, but are not always indicative of robust health. The short, stubby nail betrays the meddlesome character, hard to please, and always critical and finding fault with some thing or somebody.

Long, curved nails disclose cruelty. Women with such nails are apt to be flirts. I have frequently told girls of this trait, and they have always admitted it.

Of course no palmist ever quite dares tell all he sees in a hand, as the majority of people only care to hear the flattering side, and would be very much offended if any faults were pointed out.

All palmists see many things of which they never speak, and of some it is best never to speak. In some hands I have seen sudden and awful death, accidents, lustful natures, liars, etc. One would not wisely mention such things, for it could bring nothing but misery.

I remember when I first took up palmistry that I saw a horrible accident in the near future of a young girl. During the next month she was thrown from a horse, her skull fractured, and she died. This is only one of many experiences. No palmist has a right to sadden a life, or plant an unpleasant seed in the mind. Many have said to me: "Well, there is one thing sure, anyhow; you send every one away feeling happier than when they came."

So I feel that if one can brighten a life by palmistry, or lift one soul from the slough of despond, then it is worth while.

Keep your eye open for the story, "The Sealed Car," to appear in the next number.

THE ADJUTANT'S INVENTION

By J. H. CONNELLY

THIS is something I did not myself see, but have reason—I think—for believing it true. It was told to me by a deserter from a Georgia regiment who came into our camp. He said his service in the Confederate Army was compulsory, as he had always been a Union man at heart, and the first chance he got, skipped over from the gray to the blue. His deeds proved the honesty of his professions, for he enlisted in a New York regiment at once and did good service until he was killed in a little picket skirmish, nearly the last of the war. So the impression he made upon us was decidedly favorable to credence of what he said. And if he did not tell the truth about this game of "seven-up" he must have been a lovely liar—which I think was beyond his mentality—for he always acted, whenever he told the tale, as if the horror of it was still fresh in his realization. Here is the story, just as he told it—or as near thereto as I can recall after the years that have elapsed since I heard it—barring his queer mountaineer dialect, which I shall not attempt to reproduce.

I was on orderly duty at the colonel's tent when this happened and saw the whole of it, from the beginning to the end. The adjutant had come in to make a report about something that was to be sent over to headquarters, and found the colonel just starting to call on the colonel of an Alabama regiment brigaded with us. Glancing over the report, the colonel found a change necessary in it, told the adjutant how to fix it, and directed him to make a clean, corrected copy at once and send it to the general. Then he galloped away.

There were writing materials on the barrel-head that the colonel used as a table, and the adjutant, instead of going back to his own quarters, sat down there to do the work. While he was at it, Captain Withers, of Company D, came in to see the colonel, and finding him absent, took a stool, lighted his pipe, and talked a little with the adjutant.

This Captain Withers was a quiet, morose sort of a man, who always seemed to have something on his mind, and, as a rule, hadn't much to say to anybody. He was a dare-devil in a fight, if there ever was one, and altogether a man more respected than liked in the regiment. Back of that, nobody, so far as I ever learned, knew much about him.

I was sitting in the shade at the back of the tent, just below a square hole cut in the canvas for air, where I could hear every word said inside, if I had a mind to, but they were talking some regimental business that did not interest me, so I paid no attention and was half-asleep, when I heard words that waked me right up.

"So! You d—d scoundrel, I've found you at last?" the captain was saying, in a tone of such exultant ferocity as I never heard before or since.

And another voice, deliberate, cool, insolent, replied: "Excuse me, captain; but the exact situation seems to be that I have found you."

I wouldn't have needed to be anything of a prophet to know, from the way the two men spoke, that there was go-

ing to be trouble right near there mighty soon, and, with a natural interest in the proceedings, pulled myself up standing and peeped through the air-hole, without anybody inside noticing me. The stranger confronting Withers was a lieutenant, a good deal more stylishly dressed than we were used to see our officers, a soldierly, handsome young fellow, but with a wicked, cruel, sneering look in his face that made me dislike him. There seemed a good deal of the foreigner in his get-up—French, as it seemed to me. He was smoothed-shaved, all but a long mustache, black as a crow, that was stiffened out in a straight line each way, across his dead white cheeks, to points like needles, and his eyes glittered like bayonet tips in the sun.

"No odds how we've met, at last," pursued the captain, speaking with a sort of dogged savageness. "We have, and you know the rest. One of us dies to-day!"

"When I have discharged my duty—put these secret orders from the general in your colonel's hands, personally—I shall be ready to give Fate a chance to decide which it will be," replied the lieutenant. As he spoke, he touched an envelope tucked under his belt. The captain looked at him and seemed to hesitate, but was soldier enough yet to recognize the claim of duty above whatever ground of private quarrel he might have had, at least so long as there did not seem to be any prospect of his enemy's getting away from him. After considering a moment, he went over close to the young man, and said to him in a low voice, that quivered with passion: "What has become of her?"

"I do not recognize your right to ask me any impertinent questions," answered the lieutenant, with an insolent sneer.

The captain snatched his revolver from his holster and sprang backward a couple of steps, exclaiming hoarsely, "Defend yourself, you hound." The lieutenant was quick enough to draw his pistol, but before either could fire the adjutant sprang between them, snatched both barrels of the outstretched weapons, turning them aside, and cried out, in a commanding voice:

"Stop! You must stop. Are you fools? The colonel's quarters is not the place for that sort of thing. Neither you, lieutenant—"

"Trouvet, Ninth Louisiana," interpolated the lieutenant, calmly introducing himself, as the adjutant seemed to hesitate for a name to address him by.

"Neither you, Lieutenant Trouvet, here on important duty, have the right to put that duty aside; nor have you, Captain Withers, the right to interfere with his discharge of that duty on account of any personal quarrel."

Both saw the reason in what he said and submitted to his firm restraint, but with a bad grace, especially on the part of Withers, who growled: "I will wait until he sees the colonel. Then, I shall kill him if he doesn't run away."

"Oh, I shall not run away. We will ride together outside the camp and, beyond the lines, settle the matter."

"No," again interposed the adjutant. "You both know the strict order recently issued against dueling, and that the general has sworn he would hang the survivor of the next duel that takes place. He says the Yankees get

enough of us, without our killing each other in camp. Take my advice and let this matter stand over while the war lasts. Then, if you both are still alive, fight it out."

The lieutenant shrugged his shoulders, as if decision either way was a matter of indifference to him; but Withers went close up to the adjutant and I heard him say, very low and in a tone of restrained passion: "I confide the secret to the keeping of your honor—she was my sister."

"Oh!" exclaimed the adjutant, starting and showing that that put another face on the situation as he viewed it. "In that case—"

"Postponement, you perceive, is impossible."

"Yes; I suppose so." He spoke in a hesitating, annoyed sort of way. "But—the devil! It must be arranged so that there shall be no afterclap, no responsibility for a duel." And he looked at Trouvet, as if asking a suggestion from him.

But the lieutenant only affected to yawn, as if the affair bored him, and replied carelessly: "Any arrangement you make will suit me." The adjutant considered and presently suggested:

"Suppose you play a game of cards to decide which shall shoot himself?"

"That will do," both men assented.

The adjutant happened to have a pack of cards in his pocket. He always did. But of course he couldn't carry around a stock of chips and as the colonel's were locked up, and he seemed unwilling to leave those men together while he went for chips, poker was out of the question. He suggested seven-up. Both were willing. They would have agreed to anything he proposed. If he had said, "Settle it by cutting for high card," that would have suited them better than anything else, because it would have been the quickest. But that, as it seemed plain to me afterward, was not his game. He wanted to make a delay, somehow, until the colonel returned, when he no doubt even yet hoped that some solution of the difficulty might be arrived at.

"Hold on a moment," he said, as they were taking their places on opposite sides of the colonel's barrel table. "For an unusual occasion like this, I'd rather you'd play an unusual sort of game; one that I wouldn't have to recall every time I ever play seven-up again myself."

They looked at him inquiringly, but made no reply. He went on: "Make the game twenty-one points, and have the points count against, instead of for, the party making them; low to be caught, like jack, and count to the one who takes it in; the first winner of the stipulated number of points to be the loser of the game."

They considered a moment and were agreed, except that the captain would not hear of twenty-one points. Seven he deemed quite enough. They compromised—he and the adjutant, for the other chap acted as if it didn't concern him—on fourteen.

Withers dealt first and both were quick to catch on the novel requirements of the game, playing it as coolly and systematically as if they were only betting Confederate money on it. The only thing that looked like a mistake for a moment, was the captain's leading the queen, which gave Trouvet a chance to throw away his jack on it, but his next lead was the six, which the lieutenant took with an eight, and the six being low, that evened them. Then the captain threw away a ten, which gave his opponent game, and as his queen was high, the play of the first hand left them two and two.

It was the strangest game anybody ever saw. If a seven-up player had come along and stopped to look on, without being told of their new rules, he surely would have thought them both crazy. The major did drop in,

but as he didn't know anything about real seven-up, the new-fangled kind didn't phase him. He viewed the proceedings a few minutes, in a disinterested sort of way, and then asked if the gentlemen were not acquainted with draw-poker. They said they were. He waited a little longer, as if letting the idea soak into his mind that some other game was actually being played instead of poker, by preference. Then he sighed and went away, shaking his head.

The game was approaching near to the end when the colonel returned. He was a seven-up player, one who prided himself on his knowledge of the finesse and nice points of the really fine old game, and the conduct he witnessed at his table, before it was explained, amazed and shocked him. Immediately upon his entrance Lieutenant Trouvet arose, saluted, and presented his dispatches. Then, after calmly and courteously replying to two or three questions put by the colonel, he turned to his adversary and said, in a tone, the significance of which was fully understood by each of the hearers except the commandant, "now, with the colonel's permission, I am at your service."

"Oh! Yes. Certainly. Go right along with your game," exclaimed the colonel good-naturedly, applying himself to the missive he had just received. When he had read his orders, he sat down to look on, to his naturally ensuing astonishment. But the novelty, when explained, interested him. The next hand was the last.

One point more added to Withers' score would make the fatal fourteen. The lieutenant was four away from the death line, and self-contained as he was, could not altogether repress his exultation over the victory of which he now felt confident. It was the captain's deal.

Trouvet stood and played a tray. Withers gave him the deuce. He led again, a small card from a side suite, which the captain took without count and came back at him with the ten of trumps. Trouvet had to take it with the jack.

"That, I believe," said the captain, very blandly, "gives you all four points, as the jack is high for me, and I have no game in my hand or anything to take it with," and he laid his remaining cards on the board.

"Yes," assented the lieutenant, "and four points—puts me out."

"They put you out," echoed the captain, with significant emphasis.

"Well! of all the condemned extraordinary Bedlamite conceits, that sort of seven-up is surely supreme," remarked the colonel. The adjutant looked as if about to say something, but met Withers' eye and kept silent. The captain looked like a tiger scenting blood.

Lieutenant Trouvet arose, buckled his belt and adjusted nicely the set of his coat, while saying a few courteous words of farewell; declined with thanks, upon a plea of prior engagement, the colonel's invitation to remain for dinner, and stepped out of the tent. I moved quickly past the corner, to where I could get a good look at him, for I felt that something unusual was likely to happen mighty suddenly. He moved about a rod away, in the direction of where his horse was tethered, turned toward the three officers who stood in the tent-door looking at him, and with a movement quick as lightning seemingly, drew his revolver, put the muzzle to his right temple, blew out his brains and plunged headlong to the ground, a corpse.

It was clearly a case of suicide; "quite inexplicable," everybody said. Scoundrel he may have been—Withers knew best about that—but nery he certainly was.

We have a rousing collection of stories by famous authors ready for the next issue.

THE BIRD THAT WAS NOT COOKED

By HARRY C. ANTES

THE Major smiles, as some pleasing reminiscence of the past passes through his mind. He leans back indolently in his easy-chair, carefully wipes his mouth and military whiskers with a napkin, and then, in his slow, deliberate manner, proceeds to fill his cherished meerschaum with his favorite tobacco.

It is the regular Saturday evening session of our "club," restricted as to membership. It is more of a social than a gaming club, although the regular business of the evening is never neglected.

It is our custom, as the ghostly hour of midnight draws nigh, to send one of the "boys" to the cafe on the corner, for the purpose of purchasing a slight collation. For this purpose we levy a trifle from each man present between eleven and twelve. It is just after we have partaken of this refreshment, when the Major is in his best humor, that he often favors us with a choice anecdote.

"Well, boys, it was while Grant's army was besieging Vicksburg. I tell you it was hot down there those days. Just like it is now, when a lot of boy soldiers strut around with an idea of knocking out the kaiser. M-m-m-m-m!"

"Time hung heavy upon our hands. As you know, Grant had thrown a line of earthworks nearly around the doomed city, and behind them, in mud and heat, lay the Union soldiers, and fought flies and insects, cursed the 'rebs' and Jeff Davis, swapped lies and tobacco, contracted debts, rheumatism and pneumonia, killing time as best they could. We had become used to the infernal din, made by the big guns, which kept pounding away night and day, so that we could sleep pretty soundly through it all.

"Rations were poor—hard-tack and salt pork for the most part, with coffee made from chicory and the muddy water of the river. Fresh meat was a rare treat to us.

"One raw, chilly morning the boys of our mess were awakened by the loud, shrill crowing of a cock. Such welcome sounds we had not heard for many and many a long day. We were wide awake at once. Without delay we proceeded to arise and investigate.

"Directly in front of our tent, upon an empty box, sat a fat Dutchman, Sneider by name. In his hand he held a string which was attached to the yellow leg of a lean and scraggy rooster who was engaged in picking up a few stray kernels of corn which lay scattered upon the ground. He was a starved-looking, disreputable old game-cock, had lost one eye and wore a general air of age and decrepitude. Nevertheless, Sneider was contemplating the movements of his new possession with satisfaction, and we ourselves hailed the appearance of this new member of our company with great enthusiasm.

"'Hoorah! Pot-pie!' yelled one.

"'Stew! Soup! Roast! Stuffed! Baked!'

"Everyone had a different suggestion to make, each and all smacked their lips in anticipation. As for me, I always did like fried chicken.

"'Bully for you, Dutchy!' exclaimed Jake Simmons, a long, lanky New Englander.

"The Americanized German turned and calmly regarded the speaker:

"'Vat vor you zay, bully, Dutchy, eh? I was an American now.'

"'Why, because you have a chicken, of course. Who's hen-roost is shy?'

"'Yah, I haf got me a leetle shicken. Vat is more, I shall keep me dot leetle shicken,' replied Sneider, altogether ignoring the base insinuation conveyed in the latter phrase of Simmons' question.

"We exchanged looks of alarm. Sneider had never been regarded as the most brilliant man in camp, and the thought that we would have trouble in coaxing him to share the treat had never entered our minds.

"'My good little friend,' said I, soothingly, 'surely, you do not mean to eat that great, big rooster all alone? Why, man, you are not used to such rich fare; it's apt to cause indigestion. And indigestion, you are well aware, causes fever in this locality and is nearly always fatal.'

"Sneider slowly arose to his clumsy feet, beckoning to me with his fat forefinger.

"'Coom you here.'

"I obeyed, thinking that I was the lucky man with whom he had decided to share his 'leetle shicken.' Good, generous heart! My breast heaved with emotion, and my face was wreathed with smiles as I thought of the generosity of the good little man.

"'Look you mit dot eye in.'

"I complied, although my fond hopes of a chicken fry in the near future began to waver.

"'See you some green mit dot eye, eh?' he demanded.

"Well, I decided that there was nothing so very verdant, to be sure, in 'dot eye,' but I did see indications of a hoggish nature therein, although I was careful not to tell him so, for I still hoped against hope; so I merely told him that if any verdant thing existed in his eye it was below the surface and could not be seen.

"'Vell, den,' he exclaimed, in triumph, 'vas dot shicken so pig as an osterich, dot I should share heem mit von-tree—seex—I know not how many more—pig vellows all, hey? Nein, nein! Dot leetle yellow vas pig enough vor yoozt von alone. I haf heem caught, I vill heem eat. Today I vill fat heem, to-morrow I vill eat heem. Coom, my leetle pirdle, coom mit me. Shentlemen, I wish you all goot-day.'

"He tucked his fowl lovingly under his arm, laughing softly and winking his eye at us in a most aggravating manner as he retreated. Strange how selfish some men are. His hoggishness made me so angry that I could have brained him and taken the rooster away from him with pleasure.

"But one and all, we were of the same mind. We must, by hook or by crook, obtain possession of that chicken.

"Various and many were the stratagems to which we resorted in our efforts to separate the loving couple. Slyly we enticed the rooster from his master's vicinity with corn scattered in a line extending under our tent, where an eager man lay in wait for the unwary fowl. The onery critter ate the corn up to the very edge of the tent, and then, when success almost crowned our efforts, Dutchy

would yank at the string and pull him, squawking and fluttering, back to his protecting arms. We created a panic, and put ourselves in jeopardy of a court-martial by yelling, at the top of our voices, 'Fall in! Fall in! Rebs! Rebs!' hoping in the excitement that Snelder, for one brief moment, might desert his precious rooster. But alas! Our efforts were all in vain. Snelder, it is true, ran, gun in hand, to his place in the ranks, but from under his greasy waistcoat there protruded the scarred, one-eyed head of an old game-cock. We tried to spirit him away while Snelder slept. But he slept with one eye open and foiled our best efforts.

"When morning again dawned, Snelder was still the proud owner of the fowl, and with much cheerfulness he began to prepare for an early slaughter and his own subsequent refreshment. Then, at length, goaded into desperation, five of us, 'Lanky' Tompkins, Sam Withers, Lew Hotchkiss, Murray and myself, fell upon our last resort, 'chipped in four bits' apiece and purchased that tough old rooster at the exorbitant price of two dollars and fifty cents.

"Immediately there was another difficult question to settle.

"We'll bile that critter,' solemnly proclaimed 'Lanky,' as we stood in an admiring circle around our new property. 'En we can throw into the pot a few potatoes, a handful of corn and beans and an onion (if we can contrive to steal them somewhere), put in a little salt and pepper, and there you be! Chicken and chicken soup!"

"Bile yer grandmother!' interrupted Lew Hotchkiss, with hot and irrelevant disdain. 'Ain't yer got no sense? There is only one way to cook that fowl, and that way is to bake him.'

"First bile him, then bake him, else he'll be tougher than all git-out,' said Sam Withers.

"Murray suggested pot-pie. As for me, be that game-cock tough or tender, old or young, I had to have him fried! And fried I was determined he should be, if I had to whip all four of my partners to obtain my desire.

"Well, siree, that was a hot debate. We argued, and jawed, and bullyragged, and cussed through the whole live-long day. When night came on we had the question as near settled as when we began the debate in the morning. Never in my life did I meet with such 'sot' men as those four were.

"A chilly drizzle set in as night came on. After we had eaten our supper of hard-tack and bacon, and fed the rooster, we crouched in our tent and again began the discussion.

"Hang it all, boys!' I exclaimed at length, in disgust, as I brought my fist down with a bang upon the empty soap-box which served us for a table, 'there is only one way of settling this question—'

"I'll see you in—' (a country where the climate is extremely sultry) 'seven times over, before I'll let you fry him!' yelled 'Lanky.' 'Why, you derned old idiot—'

"Oh, shut up that big mouth of yours! Who's talking about frying him, anyhow? No matter how we cook him, he will make a mighty slim meal for five hungry men.'

"They all looked rather blank. In the heat of our argument, I do not think that one of us had thought of this question before.

"I continued: 'Now, that fowl is not large enough for five men, he is not large enough for four men, he is not large enough for three men, he would hardly make a full meal for two men, but I reckon that he would fit one man's stomach to a T!'

"They all agreed that I was right. But who was to be the lucky man? Chance must decide for us.

"Seven-up!"

"Euchre!"

"High-five!"

"Gentlemen,' I interrupted, 'you are all wrong. We are Union soldiers, Americans, and there is but one game, dice! And there is but one way of settling this question, and that is by playing a freeze-out game, the lucky man to win the rooster and cook him as he likes. Every man who throws two aces must drop out.'

"This arrangement was satisfactory to all. 'Lanky,' in an audible tone, complimented me by 'wondering why some dog-goned fool hadn't thought of it before?' We then proposed using chips, the same as in card games, the winner to be he who had the largest number.

"The soap-box we pressed into service as a table. For a light we had a smoky old lantern, borrowed from a neighbor. This threw a very dim and imperfect light over the table, but it answered the purpose well enough. We knelt around the soap-box (for we had no seats), in various picturesque but uncomfortable attitudes. I appointed myself to act as master of ceremonies. As we had no chips, I counted out to each player fifty white and twenty red grains of corn. The white grains we valued at two cents apiece, the red at five cents, thus giving to each pile a fictitious value of two dollars. Of course, table stakes were to be played, with a betting limit of twenty-five cents. We were to play until one man was 'froze out' with aces, then another and another, until finally one would own all of the chips and incidentally the object of dispute.

"Murray produced three ancient-looking dice, and the game began. And, gentlemen," says the Major, looking about to see if we are all awake and paying the proper attention to his narrative, "never before or since in my life have I 'sat in' a game in which I took such a desperate and absorbing interest as I did in this one. I must own that bird! My mouth watered for fried chicken; the smell of fried chicken was in my nostrils. I'd have that old rooster or bust! And I think that the other four were as interested in the game as I was.

"By and by Snelder wandered in and expressed great surprise, that the chicken (which we had tied fast to a convenient stake), remained alive and apparently in a healthy condition. We explained the situation to him, and he was pleased to express his approval of our plans.

"Tompkins was the first to drop out, as he rolled out two aces and a trey. 'Lanky' never could throw dice. He withdrew from the game in dismal silence and retired to gaze mournfully at the unconscious rooster, now lost to him forever. Poor fellow! I almost felt sorry for him. But I felt elated at my own luck, for 'twas I who now had most of his chips.

"My happiness was of short duration. A catastrophe, of most serious consequences, occurred, and nearly drove me frantic with rage and vexation. As I think, I mentioned before, it was a rainy night. Our tent was far from large, the front part being particularly leaky, so that we all crouched in the rear. It was my evil hap to be kneeling, with my back fairly rubbing the pole of the tent. Above my right shoulder, at some long distant date, a ragged hole had been torn in the canvas. Over this hole we had stitched an old gunny-sack. Of a sudden, I heard a strange sound by my right ear. Turning my head quickly, a rough, wet, hairy muzzle was thrust against my cheek. I yelled with fright, rolling over upon the ground. Quickly regaining my feet, I saw that the hobgoblin which had scared me out of a year's growth was nothing more nor less than a long-eared mule, who had broken his halter, strayed to our tent, poked his head through the rotten gunny-sack, and was now engaged in the agreeable occupation (to him) of eating my stack of red chips whilst my fool companions watched his proceedings with open-mouthed amazement,

and let him eat his fill! I rushed upon the intruder and smote him vigorously. The mule wisely withdrew. He had eaten up nearly a dollar's worth of my red chips! He couldn't eat the white ones. Oh, no! Dod-rot-'im," exclaims the Major, with asperity, "he had to have the best there was in sight. White corn was too common for his aristocratic blood; he must have richer food; red corn was the only proper diet for him.

"Kick! Did I kick? Of course I kicked. But the more I kicked the more those unfeeling comrades of mine laughed and roared:

"Table stakes, you know. We can't change the rules at this stage of the game."

"That was all the satisfaction that they would give me. So that 'will ye, nil ye,' with my hard luck must I be content and continue the game as best I could with my remaining chips. I vowed deep and dire vengeance upon that mule. I picked up a piece of board that chanced to lay upon the ground, and directly, when our unwelcome visitor came after the remainder of my red chips, I had the satisfaction of whacking him soundly over the head.

"Now the dice game was in full swing. Sam Withers threw three fives and 'bucked up' against a good roll which I made—a six and two fives. The result was quite discouraging to Sam, but it was just what I expected when I got my high score. Soon the small remainder of his chips went the way of their predecessors. He joined the melancholy 'Lanky,' fastening his eyes upon the rooster that could never be *his*. My star was in the ascendancy once more. Only two more between me and victory.

"All this time we could hear the boom! boom! boom! of the big guns shelling the city, and sometimes, far away, the shrill, indescribable song which the shell itself sings while in rapid flight through the air. At times, too, that unpleasant song seemed to be coming from the city towards us, for this shelling business was not one-sided by any means.

"Rebs are getting our range. Killed eight men with one shell last night," observed Tompkins.

"Ef one of them shells should happen to strike this 'ere little dice party, it would be mighty apt to raise the whole caboodle, eh, 'Lanky'?" replied Sam Withers, intent, now that he himself was out of the game, in making the remainder of us as uncomfortable as he possibly could.

"Somehow, I could not get his foolish remark out of my head. I wished the idiot had more sense than to make such remarks. That confounded screeching seemed to be coming nearer—nearer—nearer—the wild song of the shells was—I'm after you—you—you—I'm after you—you—you! Snider, too, appeared uneasy, for presently he bid us good-night, saying that he was going to his own quarters. I paid little attention to his movements at the time, for the singing of the shells, the perseverance of the mule (who continually returned) and the excitement of the dice game kept me well occupied with my own private affairs.

"Murray, about this time, went to join the others, now 'a (silent) majority,' grouped about the rooster that was never to be *his*. Lew Hotchkiss and I were alone in the struggle. Now would come the tug-of-war!

"Lew and I had been rolling the ivories alone for about thirty minutes. I suggested that we count our chips, as the two stacks seemed about equal. Lew assented. By a singular chance, each had exactly the same amount, four dollars and fifty cents. So we figured it out that the mule had eaten just ninety cents' worth of my chips.

"As it was now growing late we decided to raise the limit to fifty cents so as to finish the game sooner.

"It was my turn to throw, and I shook out a four, five and six.

"He drew down his fifteen-cent ante and shoved ten reds in the center. I followed suit.

"Lew rattled the bones and tossed a five and two sixes. We were tied. Then came the deciding roll. My opponent let drive three fives. Then I shot the cubes—three sixes!

"Every nerve in my body quivered and stung with excitement. I could hardly resist the inclination to let out a yell that would raise the tent from over our heads. Great Jehoshaphat! I had you! That rooster was mine!

"Now I always did rather like Hotchkiss. I thought I would let him off easy.

"Lew," said I, "you are beaten, but we will divide the chicken. After all, I think we can manage to make a meal of him."

"From far away in the distance came the moaning song of the shell—'w-h-r-r-r-r-r, w-h-r-r-r-r-r, I'm after you, w-h-r-r-r-r-r, w-h-r-r-r-r-r'—that shell meant business—'w-h-r-r-r-r-r, I'm after you—you—you—w-h-r-r-r-r-r—w-h-r-r-r-r-r'—we arose from our seats in terror, over-throwing the lamp and putting it out, nearer—nearer—'w-h-r-r-r-r-r, w-h-r-r-r-r-r'—outside came one yelled, 'in the tent, look out there!' and then—

"Through that hole in the canvas came what looked like a spent shell, narrowly missing my head, and rolled upon the ground at our feet. The fuse was alive and sputtered and spit spitefully.

"Oh, God save us!"

"Murder! Let me out! Murder!"

"Hells afire! Run! boys, run!"

"The shell lay between us and the front entrance, and not one of the boys seemed to like the idea of jumping over it as they made their escape. By rights, 'Lanky,' who stood nearest to the sputtering shell, should have proved the heroic stuff that was in him, and pulled that live fuse out; but he didn't. He preferred to make for the hole in the back. So did the other three. So did I.

"Who reached it first? We all did. Yes, there was not a man of the five to be the last to reach that hole. A struggle, a ripping and a tearing, and five cursing, active men landed in a heap in the mud back of the tent. I was the bottom man, and that is proof that I was the last man out of the tent. We did not stay on the ground any great length of time. I rather think, that of all the sprinting that was done in the army upon occasions, that we broke the record as we headed for the nearest rifepit.

"While we crouched in the pit the thought struck me that perhaps the mule would consider our absence an opportune time to finish his lunch with the jack-pot. When I thought of the reception he was apt to meet from the present occupant of our tent, I laughed aloud.

"We waited a long time for that shell to attend to the business upon which it came, but it d'd not do it. Finally, we concluded that the fuse had gone out, and cautiously ventured towards the tent."

Here the major paused.

"How about that shell?" asked one of his club friends.

"Wasn't any shell. Only a couple of tin cans and some scrap of iron fastened together with wire, and a lighted fuse tied to the dummy. Dutchy invented it and threw it into the tent. Of course, dark as it was in there, we did not notice the deception. No one had sense enough to investigate, anyhow, when the thing came through that hole."

"What made the sound which you took for the hissing of the shell?"

"Snider, with that big mouth of his."

"Who got the chips, major?"

"Wasn't any. Mule had eaten them up."

"Then how could you decide who owned the rooster?"

"Didn't have to decide. Snider had stolen him."

HER SUCCESSFUL BLUFF

By ALFRED E. PEARSALL

THERE could not have been found in all New England a finer specimen of the "new woman" than Abbie Raymond. Tall and muscular, with a superb figure, she was a veritable Yankee Amazon. And while built on a generous anatomical plan, Abbie possessed mental qualities almost equally striking. She had views of her own on political economy, science, religion and art. In her estimation women were destined to fill a wider sphere than rocking the cradles of possible future Presidents.

Abbie was school-mistress in a small suburb of Danbury, Conn. She had no sentimental softness in dealing with her pupils, and the birch rods were kept in quite active service. Yet with all her asperity there was a charm about her superb figure and flashing eyes, which made her admired by all the marriageable men in the village. She rode from her boarding house to the school—a distance of two miles—upon a motorcycle, and as Jack Masters, the handsome scapegrace of the village, said, Abbie takes nobody's dust."

Nothing pleased Abbie so much as to pass all the cyclists on the road, a kaleidoscopic panorama of flying ribbons and gleaming wheels, unless it was to shoot a pistol. She never shut her eyes when she pulled the trigger in her daily practice. As one of her astonished female friends said:

"I never saw such a woman! Why, she can break a sodawater bottle at thirty paces every shot. When I remonstrated with her for being so mannish, she said: 'Why shouldn't I shoot if I like it? It amuses me, and it is much more to my credit than to be an expert hair bleacher.' Well, girls, she had me there, for I am rather fond of keeping my black hair a beautiful yellow."

The Amazonian qualities which made Abbie feared by her female associates were what attracted Jack Masters' admiration.

"By George, fellows," he would say, as he sat at the window of the village saloon and saw Abbie fly by on her motorcycle; "there's a woman worth winning. Nothing nabby-pamby about her. She has an eye like the flash of a bayonet. I'd like the job of taming that young tigress."

It was rather unfortunate for Jack that he made the latter remark, for in the course of village gossip it reached Abbie's ears. Jack overtook her one evening while walking home from church, and proposed marriage. She turned upon him haughtily, a fine scorn curling her lip. Said she:

"So you wish to start in the tiger training business, do you, Mr. Masters? Well, begin with yourself. Try and subdue your appetite for whiskey; make a man of yourself whom an honest woman can respect and admire. As for myself, I can never be tamed by a man who is the victim of such glaring vices as you are! Good-night!"

Masters refused to profit by this very excellent advice. He drank more heavily than ever, and disappeared.

But Abbie's heart was not impervious to the shafts of Cupid. The little god shot his arrow true as one of her own pistol-balls when she met handsome, rollicking Tom Williams, the sailor. For eight months in the year Tom

was at sea, the first mate of a whaler. The remaining four months he passed with his old mother in Danbury. Tom was a man of herculean proportions, a tender, gracious, manly fellow, and a universal favorite among the girls. The angularities and asperities of Abbie's nature melted like snowflakes under Tom's admiring glances. She even forgot to keep up her pistol practice while he was ashore, thinking such amusement unwomanly.

When Love, the magician, touched her she began to realize in a dim, shadowy way that there are sweet mysteries in life which neither assertion nor philosophy can fathom. And so it came to pass that she stood at the gate one moonlight night in June. The stars were winking knowingly and the scent of sweet brier filled the air. Tom's arm stole around her waist, and her head nestled against his shoulder.

"Yes, Tom, I will," she replied, when he asked her the most momentous question in the world. "But promise me you will not gamble. I am afraid of card games. I have a premonition that they may cause us trouble."

"Sweetheart," he replied, "I'd give up eating if it would add to your happiness."

He laughed at her fears in his hearty fashion, promised everything in the usual reckless manner of men, and they were supremely happy. All too brief was the honeymoon, for Tom had to sail away to the North Sea within two weeks after the wedding. Abbie took up the thread of life where she had lain it down before her marriage. She still maintained her position in the school, although the birch rods were not required so often. It was weary waiting during the long winter months for the return of her husband. The Sea Gull was caught in an ice floe and was two months overdue, so that when Tom returned from his voyage an infant heir awaited him, but after four months of domestic bliss Tom sailed away again, vowing that this was his last voyage. Before he went, however, Tom removed his little family to New Bedford. Occasional letters from her husband brought by homeward-bound vessels, cheered the anxious woman as she counted the days when Tom would probably return. Meanwhile Tom had not kept his promise to Abbie regarding gambling as religiously as he should have done; many a dreary evening in the little cabin of the Sea Gull was cheered by a friendly game of "draw." There was some excuse for this trifling dissipation in the loneliness of an ocean voyage, but it had the unwholesome effect of keeping alive a spark of evil which was destined to burst into a blaze.

It was late in November when the Sea Gull sailed into the harbor of New Bedford. The voyage had been a very profitable one and Tom was richer by \$900 than when he went away. As it was nearly midnight when the vessel drew up to the wharf there were no friends to welcome the seamen. When all had been made snug on board, Tom picked up the curios which he had gathered on the voyage and stepped ashore. Tom's heart was light and his pocket heavy as he walked up Purchase Street whistling merrily on his way homeward. The captain, second mate and several seamen were in the group and at the captain's invita-

tion, which was almost as good as a command, they all went into a tavern to take a parting drink. As they entered the door Tom was saluted by a hearty slap on the back and the salutation:

"Hello, Tom, just got back from a voyage, I suppose?"

"Why, it's Jack Masters! Glad to see you, old fellow," exclaimed Tom in his hearty seaman fashion. "Haven't seen you for years. Where have you been?"

"Oh, I've been up in York State practicing law," replied Jack, the lie rolling easily off his tongue. "Come, let's have a drink. Step up, men, and join us."

"Well, I'll take just one," replied Tom. "I'm anxious to get home."

"Of course, that's natural," replied Jack. "But it's after midnight now and the folks won't miss you. They're all asleep long ago."

Masters was not aware that Tom had married his old flame, neither did Tom know that he had deteriorated into a card sharp and a swindler. There was plenty of money in the pockets of the men, and by the time that each had treated they were all in a merry mood. Under these conditions the proposition made by Jack to play a hand or two of checkers for the sake of old times was readily accepted.

The captain, second mate, Tom and Jack sat down, and the game began. It started with a dollar limit, but under the influence of liquor and the excitement of the homecoming Masters gradually raised the limit to five dollars. Tom had forgotten all about his wife and baby in the excitement of the game and he bet with the recklessness of a drunken sailor. At last there was a pot containing three hundred dollars on the table and the fight had narrowed down to Tom and Jack. The latter had drunk very little during the night and his jaws stiffened when he realized that the time had come for a grand coup. The captain and second mate were asleep in their chairs. It was Jack's deal. By the aid of a crooked pin he had fastened a bandana handkerchief across his knees so that it bagged downward between his legs under the table. In this handkerchief he had placed a pack of cards. These he deftly exchanged for the cards in play. He dealt himself a royal flush and Tom three aces and a king. Then he folded up the handkerchief containing the cards, and shoved it into his pocket. In his intoxicated condition Tom thought he had an invulnerable hand, and he bet his pile on it. There was no mercy in the heart of the shark who sat opposite to him. When every cent of Tom's money was on the table Jack called, and with a groan of dismay Tom saw the earnings of nine months' hard work and privation swept away. The reproachful face of his wife rose before him and the consciousness that he would have to go to sea again rendered him desperate. He arose unsteadily to his feet and reached for the knife in his belt. But Jack's watchful eye was upon him. He realized that Tom's death meant complicity for him. And so by soothing words he managed to restrain the maddened seaman.

"That's all right, Jack," said Tom, moodily. "But what can I tell my wife?"

"Oh, we'll fix that," said Jack, cheerily. "Come, I'll go home with you. There's fifty for you to start on," he continued, shoving a note of that denomination into Tom's vest pocket.

They passed out into the street together, Jack supporting the tottering footsteps of the Hercules who could have thrown him over his shoulders a few hours before. The first faint, trembling indications of dawn were breaking in the east when they reached the town pump.

"Hold on, Tom," said Jack, "you've got to fix up some story to tell your wife. Here's my plan. You sit under the pump while I souse you with water until you are dripping wet. We'll throw your old coat in the sewer and I'll give you mine. When we get to the house you tell your wife that you fell overboard while coming ashore from the vessel, and that you lost all your money except fifty dollars. I'll play the part of the Good Samaritan who rescued you and gave you his coat. It will work like a charm."

In his dazed condition, Tom yielded to the persuasions of his companion, and in a few minutes they arrived at the door. With a wildly beating heart Tom rang the bell. There was a flutter of women's garments in the hall, a joyous cry of recognition, and Abbie was in Tom's arms. There was no light in the hall, and Abbie did not recognize Masters.

"I suppose this is a friend of yours, Tom?" said Abbie.

"Yes. Come in, Jack."

They passed into the parlor. The gray light of dawn was stealing in the window, but it was still so dark that faces could not be distinguished. Then Tom began in trembling, hesitating accents to tell the lie that Masters had concocted. When Tom arrived at that portion of the tale where he related how he had lost his money, Abbie exclaimed as she threw her arms about his neck:

"Oh, never mind, Tom. I've got you. We'll manage it somehow. You've saved your handkerchief, anyhow," she said, playfully, as she saw the end of Masters' bandana sticking from Tom's pocket, and pulled it out. The pack of cards fluttered down upon the carpet. A flood of sunshine shot through the window. It fell upon Masters' guilty face. Abbie recognized him. Like a flash the situation burst upon her. Masters started for the door.

"Stop!" exclaimed Abbie, in imperious tones, taking a pistol from the mantel and leveling it at his head. Masters had his hand on the doorknob when Abbie sent a thirty-two-calibre bullet through his hat. Masters turned and faced the woman, his face white with fear.

"Sit down, Jack Masters," she said. "If you try to get out I will put a bullet in your eye."

Masters dropped into a chair.

"You have lied to me, Tom," said she, turning to her husband, but still covering Masters with the pistol. "You have been playing poker with this thief. And he has robbed you. How much money did you have when you came ashore?"

"Nine hundred dollars," stammered Tom.

"How much have you now?"

"Fifty."

There was a metallic ring in Abbie's voice and a steely look in her eye as she turned to Masters:

"You miserable scoundrel! You moral carrion! Take \$850 from your pocket and put it on that table within one minute, or I'll send your dastardly soul into eternity."

With trembling fingers Masters placed a crumpled roll of bills upon the table.

"Count it!" said the imperious woman, as with shaking fingers he smoothed out the crumpled notes.

"Now kick him out, Tom!" said Abbie, turning to her husband.

But Tom was crying in a rocking-chair. Scarcely had Masters' feet struck the sidewalk in a flying jump, when Abbie's arms were around her husband's neck, and she was crying, too.

MRS. MURPHY'S TURKEY

By ERNEST JARROLL

IT had been the custom for many years of the managers of the cement quarries on Cooney Island, where Michael Finn was employed, to give the men each a turkey on New Year's Day. But owing to a depression in business the turkeys were not distributed on the day before New Years. There were two practical jokers in the quarries, however, who determined that Mr. Finn should have a turkey. So they procured the legs of an old gobbler, and, with the help of a piece of sacking, stuffed with straw and rags, and properly weighted managed to make a very fine imitation of a turkey, weighing eighteen pounds. It was wrapped in paper, all but the legs. To the imitation turkey was attached a card bearing the legend, written in a neat hand:

"The Hon. James Lindsley desires to express his appreciation of Michael Finn's service during the year by a small token. Happy New Year!"

The turkey was placed in a conspicuous place in the quarry, and when Mike's gaze fell upon it he smiled broadly. The workmen gathered around as he carefully weighed the alleged turkey in his horny hand, and to the hearty congratulations replied:

"Well, lads, I'm sorry for ye, but it's aisy seein' that Mr. Lindsley knows well who aims his money!"

Throwing the bundle over his shoulder he trudged homeward up the Old Point road whistling "The Washer-woman's Lament," while the stars winked mischievously at him and the moon withdrew behind a cloud to hide her smiles. When he arrived at his shanty his wife relieved him of his burden with cries of delight, and when little Mike, his son, who had "edication," read the card, Mrs. Finn threw her arms around her husband's neck and kissed him, so keen was her appreciation of his worth as indicated by the card.

"It's only natural that you should have a turkey, Mike," said she heartily, "shure there's niver another like you in the quarry."

Mike, like most other men, accepted this encomium as his due, yet still he felt called upon to rebuke the partner of his joys by saying:

"Now thin, Biddy, I'm twinty-wan; don't be givin' me any of yer blather, but go and get the turkey ready for the pot."

"Faix, I'm not, thin," replied Biddy.

"And why won't ye?" asked Mike in a surprised tone.

"Bekase I have the blue hin and a goose already kilt for the dinner to-morrow."

"Beggorra, but that's too bad," replied Mike, "but I suppose the turkey'll keep, won't it?"

"Faith, it will not thin, Mike," said Mrs. Finn, "it's too fat and plump to keep long."

Her reply made Mike thoughtful for a few moments. He blew rings of smoke toward the ceiling and at last, taking his pipe from his mouth, exclaimed:

"Biddy, how many childer has Mrs. Murphy?"

"Three, Mike," was the reply.

"And her husband's dead three months, eh."

"Yis, three months lasht Tuesday, God pity him!"

"Biddy?"

"Yis, Mike."

"We'll give the turkey to Miss Murphy."

"Oh, Mike, ye darlin' man, may the saints sthand bechune you and harrum! Av coorse we will, acushla. The dear woman! Won't she be crazy wid joy."

After supper the whole family started out to present the turkey to Mrs. Murphy. Little Mike went ahead with the turkey over his shoulder, his father and mother walking arm in arm behind. The man in the moon had smiled when Mike went home, but as he looked down upon the trio carrying the bird to the starving widow, he seemed to burst into a loud "ha ha!" When the turkey was laid upon the table, Mrs. Murphy burst into tears of gratitude and the fatherless children gathered wonderingly around and critically examined the remarkable New Year present. Mike sent his son down to the grocery for a pint of the stuff which both cheers and inebriates, and Mrs. Murphy made some smoking hot punch which the elders drank to the health of everybody, and to themselves in particular. Mrs. Murphy called down the blessings of all the saints in the calendar upon the heads of her kindly neighbors. Then she tucked up her skirts and danced a reel upon the hearthstone just as she had done in Ballyscuttry hundreds of times in her youth. All the cares of life dropped away from the little group under the genial influence of the "crater." Laughter and song kept the little Murphys awake until long after midnight, while the stuffed turkey hung by the legs from the eaves to keep it fresh and cool for the pot on the following day. When the chimes in St. Mary's steeple told the hour of one, the Finn family returned to their home, their hearts glowing with kindness and filled with the consciousness of genuine philanthropy.

New Year's Day broke clear and bright over Cooney Island. The sun shone through the windows upon Mrs. Murphy as she laid the turkey upon the dissecting table and began the operation necessary to prepare the fowl for dinner. She had made a small incision in the southwest end of the sacking covering the fictitious bird, when a piece of rag fell upon the table, followed quickly by nearly a quart of small stones containing a large percentage of cement. These stones were really valuable in a lime kiln, but of no particular use inside a turkey—at least, this was the view Mrs. Murphy took of their presence. An angry scowl overspread her face as she exclaimed:

"By the hair on Moll Kelly's cat, I never thought much of them Finns, anyway. They are a dirty lot to play so mane a trick on a widdy wid three starvin' childer. But I'll give Mike Finn back his turkey wid me two hands, and may the curse of Kisgogue rest upon him and Biddy and the lad!"

Mrs. Murphy was a large and muscular woman. There was a stern look on her strong face, and a fierce setting of the jaws, as she started up the Old Point road, carrying the turkey by the legs, and leaving a trail of fine cement stones behind her. Mr. Finn was awakened from his mor-

ing nap by a tremendous knock on the door. Turning over, half awake, he said:

"Mickey, go and open the door, that's a good lad."

Little Mike, partially dressed, went to the door, and standing upon the stoop was Mrs. Murphy. She stepped aside, and, swinging the turkey around, she brought the bird into violent contact with the boy's head, knocking him over the stove. Then rushing into the bedroom before either Mr. Finn or his wife could arise, she lambasted them furiously with the remains of the imitation fowl. And, to the rattle of cement stones against the wall and ceiling, she kept up a running accompaniment such as:

"Hide yer head, Mike Finn! Get under the quilt! Chate the widdy and her childer, will ye! Make me a present of rags and stones! Oh, ye Biddy, ye scut! May the devil fly away wid ye! My heavy hand on both, that ye may ate burnt feathers and drink vinegar when the

thirst is on ye! Show yer dirty face, Mike, and I'll ram the legs down yer red neck!"

When the door banged behind her, Mr. Finn got out of bed and picked the cement stones out of his ears and whiskers. Then he comforted his wife, who, with hair streaming down her back and uplifted hands, exclaimed:

"Holy murder! 'Tis a cruel man that stuffed that turkey! Usha, but Mrs. Murphy must be crazy!"

Mr. Finn went into the kitchen, and found Mickey in the corner nursing a bruised shin.

"She threw me over the stove," said the boy, with a howl of pain. "I wonder what ailed her?"

"Faith, I dunno. I'm afeared she's gone crazy wid joy becase she got the turkey. Begorra, 'tis the lasht time I'll make a fool o' meself wid generosity. The next time I have a turkey to give away, I'll kape it myself. Go to bed, boy, or you'll freeze yourself."

CONCERNING OUR FLAG

INDEPENDENCE DAY, 1918, marked the centennial of the adoption of the present form of the American flag. Prior to this there were many forms of early flags, especially Colonial types used by the individual colonies and militia regiments before the flag of the United States, was established by Congress on June 14, 1777, now celebrated as Flag Day.

This act required that the flag of the United States be of thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white, and that the union be thirteen white stars on a blue field, but it did not define how many points the stars should have, nor how they should be arranged, nor make provisions for additional ones.

One of the first occasions for public display of the Stars and Stripes is said to have been on August 6, 1777, when the new flag was hoisted over the troops at Fort Schuylers, Rome, N. Y. John Paul Jones is said to have been the first to fly the Stars and Stripes over the high seas, on the *Ranger*, in November, 1777. The National Museum in Washington has an early Naval twelve-star type flag said to have been flown by John Paul Jones during the Revolutionary War.

From the time of the Revolution the stars and stripes in the flag have varied, says the *San Francisco Chronicle*. There were 13 stars during the Revolution, 15 in the War of 1812, 29 in the Mexican War, 33 to 35 in the Civil War, 45 in the Spanish War and 48 to-day.

The stripes were changed first from 13 to 15 and then back again to 13.

It may be surprising to know that the American national flag is among the oldest flags of the nations, being older than the present British jack, the French tricolor and the flag of Spain, and many years older than the flags of Germany and Italy, some of which are either personnal flags or those of reigning families.

The American flag of the highest historical and sentimental value to the whole country is in the National Museum collections. It is the original Star Spangled Banner, which flew over Fort McHenry, in Baltimore Harbor, during the bombardment on September 13-14, 1814, and was the inspiration of Francis Scott Key's immortal poem, now sung as the American national anthem.

It is of the fifteen-star-and-stripe type, adopted after the admission of Vermont and Kentucky by an act approved by President Washington, January 18, 1794.

The Star Spangled Banner measures about thirty feet square, though it was probably somewhat longer and is much battered and worn, with one star missing, possibly shot away.

From 1795 this form continued as the standard flag until President Monroe's Administration, when Congress enacted that it should thereafter be of thirteen stripes and twenty stars, with the addition of a star for each new State, commencing with July 4, 1818.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

- | | | | |
|-------|---|--------|---|
| No. 1 | THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown | No. 12 | THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler |
| 2 | ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty | 13 | UNDER A MASK, by Crittenden Marriott |
| 3 | THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry | 14 | CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall |
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| 11 | THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown | | |

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THE FATAL PRINTS

A Serial Detective Story

By WILLIAM S. HALL

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ARREST

"On reaching my quarters I found a note there from Ned Crenshaw, asking why I had not communicated with him in regard to the heiress.

"Ah! I had forgotten all about that," and I smiled to myself over the eagerness of my friend to catch a rich wife. Hastily writing a note explaining why I had not attended to his case, I rolled into bed and tried to sleep. But the prospect of making some progressive steps the next day or two kept me awake the greater part of the night. I finally slept, and dreamed of the gentle Tillie who had been of so much service to me. But very different she was to me in my dream. I dreamed that she had turned against me with all the fury of an enraged tigress, and exclaimed:

"I'll be the death of you, you wretch!" and with that she buried her fingers in my hair, and sought to hammer my face.

"In the struggle to free myself from her clutches I awoke, and blessed my lucky star that it was all a dream.

"I thought no more about it, and soon after breakfast set out in search of several of the young men whose names I had. There was little difficulty in finding the first three. They were just such fellows as I expected to find. Young hoodlums who congregated on certain corners, and lived, heaven only knows how. As for an honest day's work, I doubt if one of them had ever known what it was. I found them together on a corner, smoking rank cigars, and talking the worst slang ever heard in that part of the city. A small boy pointed them out to me.

"Is Jack Coman in this party?" I asked, stepping up to where five were standing.

"Yes, that's my handle," replied a slangy young fellow, about twenty years of age, 'what yer doin' wid it?"

"All five at once crowded around me.

"A friend told me that you could probably tell me where I could find Billy Graham," I answered.

"Billy Graham. What yer want o' Billy, anyhow?" Coman asked.

"He has had a snug little fortune left him," I replied, by way of a bait.

"Wot a lark," cried one of the party. "Billy a millionaire."

"Coman looked hard at me for a few minutes, and then asked:

"What's yer givin' me?"

"I am giving it to you as straight as a string," I replied.

"Show yer papers."

"I looked the young reprobate in the eyes, and saw that he did not believe my story.

"Go down to the Public Administrator's office and you will find out all about it."

"That settled it. They swallowed the yarn, and Coman said:

"Billy is keepin' shady."

"Oh, in trouble, eh?" said I.

"Yes."

"Well, he'll have money enough to buy his way out of any trouble he may be in. Just tell me where I can find him, and I'll set up cigars and drinks for the crowd."

"Many commendatory expressions followed my offer. One of the party went in search of Graham, whilst the rest rushed inside a saloon to get their drinks and cigars.

"Bartender!" I called out, as I entered the saloon, 'let 'em have drinks and cigars as long as this will last. I will be back in ten minutes,' and laying a five-dollar bill on the bar, turned and passed out to the street again.

"My object was to follow the one who had gone after Graham. I was quite sure that if Graham was in hiding it was to avoid the officers of the law, and that on hearing the story about a fortune awaiting him, he would make himself very scarce. On reaching the street I got a glimpse of the fellow half a block away, and at once began shadowing him. He was in no wise suspicious, but went direct to a poverty-stricken hashery and beer saloon combined, where he found his man. I entered the saloon, and, pulling my hat well down over my eyes so as to partially conceal my face, called for a beer. While the drink was being prepared I kept an eye on the two men.

"Why, blame your thick skull!" exclaimed Graham, in low tones, yet loud enough for me to catch his words, 'it's a dodge to nab me.'

"Guess not," said the young hoodlum.

"Don't I know? My real name ain't Bill Graham, so there ain't no fortune left me by nobody."

"Well, — his sneakin' soul!" hissed the other, 'I'll go back an' make the gang lay 'im out!' and he turned to leave when I laid my hand on Billy's shoulder.

"I want you, Billy," I said, very quietly.

"Who the — are you?"

"I am Detective Croly."

"That witted him. My battle with the 'toughs' the week before had made my name a terror to many of the rascals in the city. The other fellow slipped out and got away. I was satisfied, however.

"You're wanted at headquarters, Billy," I said. "Will you go quietly, or shall I put the bracelets on?"

"I will go," he said, and we started out."

"Young Graham seemed utterly crestfallen as I led him out into the street. Yet there was none of the bully's bravado about him that I could see.

"Which one is it?" he asked, as soon as we were out on the street.

"I did not catch his meaning, but kept that fact concealed from him, by asking:

"How many are they, Billy?"

"Three," he answered.

"His candor somewhat puzzled me, but I thought it best to say no more to him till we reached headquarters.

"Well," I said, 'you will know all about it when we reach headquarters.'

"Will they all be there?" he asked.

"Come on—we'll take the cars up on the avenue," said I, leading him up the street.

"We had gone scarcely half a block when I heard a noise and excited voices behind us. Looking back I saw Jack Coman coming toward us at the head of a gang of young ruffians.

"Kill the sneak of a cop!" cried Jack, flourishing a slung-shot in his right hand.

"Many other sanguinary suggestions were made as the gang rushed at me.

"Quick as a flash I clapped the handcuffs on Graham and then drew my revolver on the gang.

"You are a dead man, Jack Coman," I called out to their young leader, 'if you come any nearer!'

"Jack recoiled as he saw my revolver. He had a wholesome fear of bullets and didn't want any in him. But some one behind the young rascal fired a shot. The ball grazed my left temple so close as to stun me. I staggered backward, clutching at the air. A yell burst from the gang and then a rush was made. When I came to, I was being conveyed to a hospital, about as badly broke up as any man you ever saw, to be alive. The whole gang must have jumped on me. I was black and blue from head to foot. While no bones were broken, every joint ached like two-forty.

"Where's Graham?" I asked of the officer who was sitting alongside of me in the ambulance.

"Graham? Who is Graham?"

"Billy Graham, the prisoner I had when those roughs attacked me," I replied.

"I saw nothing of him," the officer said. 'Who are you?'

"I am Ben Croly, detective."

"The devil!"

"Yes. I had the bracelets on Graham. Go back and see if you can't trace him. Your fortune will be made if you can get him!"

"The officer told the driver of the ambulance that he had to make an arrest, and sprang to the ground. The surgeon at the hospital knew me, and plastered me up in his best style.

"They must have danced on you, Croly," he remarked, as bruise after bruise showed up.

"I think they did," I said, 'but I wouldn't mind the bruises if I had not lost my man.'

"Boys, I was used up completely, for I now knew that Graham would give me a long and hard chase. Somehow, I felt that he was the murderer of the old miser, and that he was hiding on that account. But I had found my game, and was determined to run him to earth even though it cost my life. I was lying in bed covered with arnica plasters when the chief came in, accompanied by the surgeon.

"Hello, Ben!" he exclaimed, with a hearty, cheery way. 'How's this?'

"Well, you see how it is," I answered. 'A man can't expect to win every battle, you know.'

"That's good philosophy," he said, laughing again. 'There's no danger of a man's dying when he talks that way.'

"No, I won't die yet a while."

"How is it you didn't down some of that gang?" the chief asked.

"Because I hesitated to shoot, and they got in the first shot. That laid me out."

"Do you know any of the gang?"

"Yes—Jack Coman was the leader, and Dick Fergus and Mike Creely were the ringleaders with him."

"I'll set men after them at once," he said. 'Do you want anything?'

"Nothing," I replied, 'save to get another chance at my game.'

"You can have all the chance you want, Ben."

"The chief went away, and a few days later I left the hospital, right side up, except a few bluish spots here and there. When I reached headquarters, I found that all the city papers had given graphic accounts of the battle with Coman's gang, and the rescue of the prisoner, and that nearly everybody had heard of it. A good many of the force laughed at my easy defeat, and I didn't feel very kindly toward the Coman gang, as you may readily suppose. The evening after leaving the hospital I resolved to devote to gentle Tillie Truxton, and assure her that Graham was still alive. As I neared her humble home I saw her standing at the door, talking to a young man, who looked very much like one of the Coman gang.

"Good-evening, Tillie," I greeted her familiarly as I came up, lifting my hat like a French dancing-master.

"To my infinite surprise she flew at me and buried both her little nut-brown hands in my hair, screaming:

"I'll be the death of you, you wretch!"

"Would you believe it, boys, I actually thought of my dream, in which I heard her repeat those very words! She pulled, clawed and screamed until I grew tired of the fun. I took her by the wrists and gave them such twists that she was glad enough to let go of my scalp-lock. Just as she released her hold, the youth to whom she was talking when I came up, clapped a pistol to my head and pulled the trigger. The pistol missed fire. The narrow escape made my blood run cold. I grabbed him with my left hand and gave him a blow in the face with the right, that made him as limber as a wet rag. The claret poured from his mashed proboscis, at the sight of which Tillie screamed 'Murder!' at the top of her voice. People came running up from every direction. The shoemaker and his whole family came tumbling downstairs in the wildest excitement, and found me with my grip on the young rough, who was bleeding at the nose like a stuck pig.

"What's the matter!" demanded an excited citizen.

"It means that I am an officer, and that I have caught one of the Coman gang," I replied.

"The name of the Coman gang was fresh in the public mind at the time, and they gazed on the youth with no little curiosity.

"He is a wretch—a vile wretch!" cried Tillie Truxton, in her wild excitement, and on seeing who I was, the shoemaker was inclined to pitch into me.

"What are you doing here, sir?" he demanded, in a very threatening tone of voice.

"Doing my duty, sir," I replied.

"What is your duty?"

"To arrest you if you interfere with me by word or act," was my reply.

"That settled him. He shrunk back as if he felt that it would be better for him had he remained upstairs.

"Tillie," I said to the girl, who was abusing me to her heart's content, 'when I have locked this young scamp in a cell I shall come for you. I didn't know you belonged to the gang, or I should have run you in before.'

"I intended merely to give her a scare for her savage

attack on me. Then, with my prisoner, I marched off to the nearest station, where I delivered him up as one of my assailants in the Coman gang. I also charged him with assault with intent to kill, producing the pistol he had held against my head, every barrel of which was loaded. Of course, I did not go back after the girl. I had no such intention. She could be of no more use to me. She had answered my purpose. But I turned my attention to the young rascal I had arrested. To him I offered immunity from the consequences of his crime if he would tell me of the whereabouts of Billy Graham. He was as true as steel to his comrade, and would not open his mouth.

"You'll go up for ten years," I said, by way of frightening him.

"Let 'er rip," he said.

"Leaving him in the station I returned to my quarters and proceeded to disguise myself, so as to go unknown among the gang and prosecute my search for Graham. Whilst getting up the disguise, I could not help speculating on the sudden change that had come over Tillie Truxton. It was quite evident that she had a secret liking for young Graham, and that he had probably been a lover of hers. I recalled to mind how pallid she looked when I told her that cock-and-bull story about the drowned man with the marked shoes on his feet. When she read the story of my arrest of Graham, and his rescue by the Coman gang, she probably tumbled to my game, and was angered at having been used as a means of finding him out. The next day, when I called at headquarters to see if any of the force could penetrate my disguise, I was pained to find myself looked upon as an entire stranger. I made myself known to the chief, however, and was commended for my skill at disguising.

"See here, Ben," he said, 'here is a letter from your female friend,' and he drew from his desk a letter to me in care of the chief.

"I did not recognize the handwriting, but opened the letter, which read as follows:

"No. — E. 12th Street, N. Y.

"DEAR SIR—I see in the papers that you have been badly used while in pursuit of the murderer of my late uncle. I had hoped to see you before this in regard to the matter, and hope you will call on me as soon as you can conveniently do so. Respectfully,

"DORA CREIGHTON."

"It's from the heiress, chief," I said, handing him the letter.

"He read it carefully, and said, as he returned it:

"She may be able to place some information in your way. You had better call on her at once, and see what she wants."

"I will go right now," I said.

"Not in that disguise, I hope."

"No, of course not."

"Going back to my quarters, I laid aside my disguise, and proceeded to call on the heiress.

"She received me cordially, and congratulated me on having escaped death at the hands of the gang of ruffians.

"You did not call on me as you promised," she said.

"Pardon me, but you see I have been very busy since I saw you last, and have had but little time I could call my own."

"So you have. I have been extremely anxious to hear all the news about the case, and naturally thought that you were in a position to know more about it than any one else."

"Yes—yes, of course," I replied. "I am inclined to be-

lieve that I have the real murderer in my grasp when that gang took him from me the other day."

"What! that man Graham!"

"Yes; but keep that to yourself, as I don't think he suspects that's what I'm after him for."

"Oh, I won't say a word to anybody about it. Why do you think he is the guilty one?"

"Circumstances of which I cannot speak at present lead me to suspect him."

"Oh, I do hope you may succeed in finding him."

"Thanks. I haven't the slightest doubt about finding him. It's only a question of time."

"I am glad to hear that. I had a friend here to see me last night who said he thought he knew that man Graham."

"Indeed! Who is he?"

"He is David Cochran. He lives in Paterson, but has lived a good deal in New York."

"How did he come to know Graham?"

"He said he was once a salesman in a shoe store in which Graham worked as journeyman, and, from what he had read in the papers since the rescue, he is satisfied that he is the man."

"What is Cochran now doing?"

"He is some kind of an agent, I believe."

"How long have you known him? You see a detective asks many questions."

"I have known him for more than a year."

"Would you mind giving me his address?"

"No; but I don't believe I know exactly where he can be found, for I think he is now in the city."

"Do you expect to see him again soon?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He may call this evening. He wants me to go to the theater with him, but I declined, under the circumstances."

"Quite right," I remarked.

"Yes, I thought so, but he insists on my going."

"Oh, he is an admirer?" I suggested.

"Yes, but the admiration is all on one side; and she laughed. 'I liked him well enough as a friend. I am sure I would not like him as a husband.'

"Now that you are an heiress he is more devoted than ever?"

"I suppose so," and she laughed again.

"Will you allow me to call on you when he is here, so I can see and talk with him?"

"Oh, yes, for I am quite anxious you should succeed in your search for the murderers."

"That was enough. That evening I kept a watch on the house till I saw a young man enter, being admitted by a servant."

"That's my man," said I; and ten minutes later I rang the bell and asked for Miss Creighton.

"I was admitted, and in a few minutes was introduced to Cochran. As she had spoken to him about my desire to meet him, he eyed me rather suspiciously, I thought. She afterwards told me that he objected to seeing me, saying he knew nothing against Graham, and that he might be an innocent man after all."

"Miss Creighton tells me you are acquainted with Graham, Mr. Cochran," I said, in a few minutes after meeting him.

"Yes, sir. When I read a description of him in the papers, and saw his name, I remembered seeing him in the work department of a house in which I was employed."

"Do you know anything about him?" I asked.

"He was regarded as a wild, reckless kind of a fellow, who never stayed long in any one place."

"That's the same opinion I've had from others," said I, "and I guess it's a correct one."

"Yes, sir."

"When did you see him last?"

"Let me see; and he sat in a thoughtful attitude several minutes, as if trying to recall the time and place where he had last seen the young man.

"I think the last time I saw him it was in a shoe shop over on — Street, near Ninth Avenue."

"I started, for that was Truxton's shop, where Graham had last worked.

"Was he working there?"

"Yes, I think he was. I know that he was sweet on the shoemaker's daughter, for he and she were together when I saw him."

"That was all straight, for it was corroborated by what I already knew.

"You have not seen him since that time?"

"No, sir."

"You don't know why he left there?"

"No, sir, nor when he left."

"Thanks, Mr. Cochran," I said, "I will have to depend on my skill as a detective to find him."

"Why do you think he is the murderer of Mr. Creighton?" he asked.

"Because certain circumstances point to him. We don't really know that he is; we can soon determine that when we catch him."

"Some people still believe that it was suicide?"

"Yes, but they don't know enough of the case to form an opinion about it," I said.

"Just what I think, too," he observed. "I don't think he was a man to commit suicide, from what I have heard of him."

"After conversing a while with the heiress and Cochran, I bade them good-evening and departed."

CHAPTER EIGHT

ON GRAHAM'S TRAIL

"On my way back to my quarters I came to the conclusion that Cochran was in love with Dora Creighton, and that she was by no means in love with him.

"She probably endures him," I said to myself, 'because he is the only one who has shown her any particular attention. I think Ned Crenshaw would cut him out there completely.'

"I made up my mind to tell her about Ned when I saw her again, and ask permission to introduce him. In the meantime, however, I resolved to go on a still hunt for Bill Graham and Jack Coman. I was determined to take young Coman in at all hazards, if I ever ran across him again. The next day, disguised as a young 'tough,' I went over to the East Side, and made my way up to the old haunts of the Coman gang. They were quite fly, knowing that they were wanted for the rescue of Graham. But I spent two or three days around the saloons, talking slang, drinking beer, smoking cheap cigars, and showing a little money now and then. I caught up with two or three of the gang, and soon had them laboring under the impression that I was an out-and-out fakir. Of course I did not fail to drop hints now and then that I was, and that business was good with me. That did the business. They took me into their confidence, and in a little while I had many of their secrets. On going to my quarters one night, I found a note from the chief, informing me that Truxton, the shoemaker, had been to headquarters to report that his daughter Tillie had disappeared from her home on the night I arrested the young rough in front of her door.

"By the great terror!" I ejaculated, on reading the note, 'I gave her a worse scare than I thought. She has gone to Graham, probably, and told him all about the stamp-on-the-shoe business. Confound her pretty hide! I'd like to wring her nose, or pull her ears for her. But I'll run across them yet in this disguise. They can't penetrate it, and the first thing they know I'll have them.'

"I was soon back in the haunts of the Coman gang, and one evening, in conversation, I mentioned something about Ben Croly, the detective.

"We're layin' for 'im,' said the young tough.

"So am I, and I reached over and took his hand, 'for he pulled me in once, and that's what I'll never forgive.'

"That's me," and he grasped my hand in a hearty grip. 'Jack, Mike, Dick an' the rest of the gang is layin' low for 'im.'

"Count me in on that," I said. 'If I had help I could get away with 'im most any evening.'

"He's a bad guy," said the young rascal.

"Give me a gang at my back an' I'll down him so quick he'll never know what struck 'im.'

"We'll do it."

"Good!" said I. 'Let's have something?'

Something meant cigars and whisky, and in another hour I had him as full as a goat.

"Of course whisky loosened his tongue, and we talked freely about Croly and the gang.

"What did Croly nab Graham for?" I asked him.

"For getting too many girls on a string."

"What?"

"For mashin'—got too many girls in love with him, promisin' to marry 'em all, an' so had to skip."

"Here was a revelation. He might not be hiding from me after all. I now recollected that he had skipped away from Truxton's nearly a month before I went there. I tell you, boys, it made my head swim to think that after all I might be on a false scent. Then, too, I recollected the questions Graham put to me just before the gang swarmed on top of me. I didn't understand them then, but I did now. But I resolved to see it to the end.

"Isn't any of his mashes with him now?" I asked.

"I dunno. Jack knows."

"Where is Jack?"

"Down at Paddy Higgins' den."

"Would he help me get away with Croly?"

"Will a duck swim?"

"Can we see the rest of the gang?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll fix it," and I called for another round of drinks and cigars.

"That evening we went down to Paddy Higgins' den, a low drinking place.

"There we met several of the Coman gang, some of whom I recognized as my assailants on the day Graham was rescued from my grasp. Mike Creely and Dick Fergus came in after a while, and I soon became known to them as a successful crook who had once been taken in by Ben Croly. As I had a certain character to keep up I paid for several rounds of drinks and cigars, and let the conversation take its course. My companion was full of the subject of knocking the detective out, and soon brought us around to that point. Dick and Mike entered eagerly into the plot, and asked how the thing could be done. I looked cautiously around the den, and remarked:

"I am not fool enough to talk it up in a public place like this. We must know who we are talking to, and that nobody else hears what we say."

"Right yer are, cully," said Dick Fergus. 'We kin git the "back hole" for a dollar an hour.'

"Let's have it, then," I said.

"Gimme the dollar," said Dick, "an' I'll git it from Paddy."

"I gave him a two-dollar bill, saying:

"Get drinks and cigars, too."

"He took the money and went to the proprietor of the den, a villainous-looking individual behind the rude apology for a bar at the farther end of the room. Five minutes later he returned with a key, and said:

"Come on," and led the way to a room in the rear of the place.

"At the farther end of the other room was a door, which was locked. The key opened it, and we entered what was called the 'back hole.' It had a ventilator, but no window or door other than the one through which we entered. Just such places in this city are where crimes of every description are concocted. There were four of us as we sat down to a plain pine table and took a drink of the vile stuff my money had paid for.

"Look hyer," said Mike Creely, as he lit a cigar; "Billy ought ter have a hand in this 'ere pie."

"Yes, that's so," assented Dick, "go an' git 'im, Mike."

"Mike turned and left the room, and we devoted the time to the bottle and cigars while he was gone. In some ten minutes Mike came in, and Billy Graham was with him. I fairly chuckled in my sleeve at my success in getting my eyes on him again. He was the same as when I last saw him, save a look of worry that was plainly perceptible in his face. I was introduced to him as Bob Bowen, a lively crook. He shook hands with me and sat down to the table, took a drink and then lit a cigar.

"Yes," he said, "I'm keepin' shady till Croly lets up. He is after me for havin' too many girls on a string, an' I don't want to go up the river just for lovin' too many of 'em."

"Of course not," I said. "If that's the worst thing against you that can be worked out, all right."

"That's all that's agin me," he said, "but how in thunder can that be settled?"

"By working the girls," I said.

"Oh, that be hanged!"

"You don't think it will do?"

"No."

"Why?"

"They're too mad."

"That shows you don't know very much about working 'em," I said. "When a woman once likes a man he can work her for all she is worth if he goes at her the right way. Now you can stuff each of 'em with a batch of promises that will stave 'em off six months. And what can't be done in that length of time?"

"Graham looked at me in surprise."

"There's one of 'em lookin' for me now with blood in her eyes," he said.

"That doesn't make any difference," I said. "If you make her a promise to stick to her and be true as steel, she'll fall to you like a sick kitten to a hot brick."

"Hanged if I don't wish I knew it," he said, with a long-ling look in his eyes.

"Just send me to the girl, and we'll see how it works. That's the way to find out."

"Bust me, ef he ain't right, Bill," exclaimed Dick Ferguson. "I'd try it, anyhow."

"I will," said Graham. "The one who is lookin' for me has run away from home 'cause Croly threatened to arrest her for pullin' his hair when he arrested one of the gang in front of her home."

"What's her name?"

"Tillie Truxton. She told Mike she was lookin' for me, but he was fly, an' wouldn't croak on me."

"Do you know where she is now?" I asked, turning to the fellow called Mike.

"Yes."

"All right. I'll bring her to her senses the first time I see her."

"Then I turned to Graham, and asked:

"What's the use of hiding? Why not rig up an' go about like a free bird?"

"Can't do it—ain't got no sugar."

"Pshaw! I'll rig you up so your girls, your mother, or Croly himself won't know you."

"I say! and he grasped my hand. 'You're the best friend I've met since the camel got his back up.'"

"Oh! that's all right," I said. "We'll get square with Croly, an' then call it square between us."

"Done!" and he grasped my hand again and wrung it with intense earnestness.

"I'll bring you a wig and beard to-morrow night," I said, "and fix you up all right. In the meantime, I will see Tillie and see what her game is."

"Then we proceeded to discuss the plan to get square with myself. Graham and the others entered into the plot with the greatest enthusiasm. Of course, we did not arrange any definite plan on that evening, as Jack Coman was not present. He was the leader of the gang, and one we could not well do without, so we adjourned to meet again the next night at the same place. To avoid exciting Graham's suspicions, I did not attempt to follow him that night. I knew I could now keep my eye on him, and so was not in a hurry to spoil the game. The next day, however, I met Mike Creely, at Higgins' den, and got from him the address of Tillie Truxton. She was stopping with a girl of very doubtful character, whose lover was of the Jack Coman stripe. The truth is I had regretted giving her the scare that had caused her to leave her home, and was afraid she would find out Graham's hiding-place and take up with him. If the thing was possible I intended to save her from throwing herself away on a worthless young scamp like him. When I called at the address given, I was told that she was not in. Not believing the story I stationed myself at a convenient point where I could watch the door of the house. A half hour later I saw her come out and start down the street. Waiting till she had gone several blocks, I stepped up to her and called her by name. She started, as if greatly frightened, and seemed on the point of running away. Don't be uneasy, Tillie," I said. "I am a friend of yours, as well as Bill's."

(To be continued)

THE CENSUS IN ANCIENT TIMES

WHILE the greatest strides in the advance of vital statistics as a science have been made in recent years, their origin may be traced to centuries before Christ. Indeed, Herodotus tells us of a census of Egypt taken about 3050 B. C. for the purpose of making arrangements for the construction of the pyramids. Elsewhere this same author refers to a second census, taken about 1400 B. C. in

Egypt by Rameses II., for the purpose of reapportioning all the land of Egypt among his subjects. The Bible tells us that Moses counted the tribes of Israel to determine their fighting strength, and that David, about 1018 B. C. took a census for the same purpose. There is a record of a census taken in China about 1200 B. C., when data of the provinces were collected by Uking.

CURRENT NEWS

CAUGHT IN HOT GRATES

Frank Steele and Adam Schedunk were killed, and Percy Scott injured when the boilers at the Bartlett Lumber Company at Shell Drake, Mich., exploded and demolished the machine shop and dynamo room. Schedunk, caught between two hot grates, had his body almost burned in two, but death did not relieve pain for five hours.

PRO-GERMAN FOBS BARRED

All persons in Delaware, O., who have been wearing a black ribbon watch-fob with a white edge have discarded it. It has just been learned here that this is the form of attachment for the Iron Cross, the mark of a super-murderer given by the Huns to their arch fiends. Such a fob in England and France is said to be regarded as the mark of a German sympathizer.

FREAK OF LIGHTNING

A bolt of lightning, it was reported recently, tore a shoe off the foot of Miss Frances Evans, a teacher in the Octavia School. Miss Evans was looking out of the window during a storm at Octavia, Neb. She was struck by the bolt of lightning and knocked unconscious to the floor, suffering from burns about the head and body. The lace of one of her shoes was broken and the other shoe was found in another part of the room.

GERMAN AIRPLANE WITH FIVE MOTORS

There was recently brought down behind the British lines a German biplane of large dimensions, equipped with five engines. This machine, which is a night bombing plane, is the first brought down equipped with five engines. Developing some 260 horsepower each, the five engines give the plane a total horsepower of 1,300. This plane is evidently one of them that Germany has constructed in anticipation of long-distance night raiding.

IODINE FUMES IN TREATMENT OF BURNS

Iodine fumes have given excellent results in the treatment of both burns and ulcers, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Two applications of iodine fumes to a large ulcer resulted in a rapid cure, and in the case of an appendicitis patient who had received a severe burn from a hot water bottle, the lesion, after having resisted ordinary treatment for a month or two, yielded readily to the iodine treatment.

GOLD IN OLD DIGGINGS

A large piece of virgin gravel has been found in the old Hilo diggings at Chaparral Hill, Cal., by men who have been mining there on a small scale.

The gravel is very rich in gold, and is of the same deposit from which several fortunes were taken in former years. A drift run 100 feet on the gravel has not disclosed its full extent. How this body of gold bearing gravel came to be overlooked by the early miners is something of a mystery.

PICK JAILER'S POCKETS

Privates Otto M. McSwann and Patrick McGatton, deserters from Camp Lee, Virginia, and Frank Hall, street car motorman, serving a long sentence on a statutory charge, walked out of the Knox County jail, Vincennes, Ind., the other morning after taking the keys to the outer doors from the pockets of Jailer William Blunk.

The jailer's room is barred the same as an ordinary cell, the prisoners securing their release from the "bull pen" by picking the lock. The prisoners' escape was not noticed until after the men had several hours start.

A WOODEN-LEGGED COW

That a broken leg need not be a handicap in the bovine species has been demonstrated by a valuable cow which was found on the ranch of A. C. Chafin, near the town of Temple, in Texas, says *Popular Science*. A corn-planting machine was the means of accidentally breaking one of her legs and her owner substituted therefor a wooden member. It fits so well that she walks about with the same ease that she possessed before the accident occurred.

This successful surgical operation will no doubt suggest to other farmers the feasibility of saving their cattle when they are similarly injured.

This cow's milk is as good as ever in spite of her accident and her artificial but serviceable leg.

INJECTING WATER INTO PUMPKINS FOR GROWTH

Pumpkins, vegetable marrows, etc., grow at a great rate; but their development may be hastened to an astonishing degree by feeding them through the stalk with plain water, writes S. Leonard in *Popular Science*. Holes are made in the stems of the fruits and into these the ends of lamp wicks are pushed. The other ends of the wicks, which are preferably rounded, rest in jars of fresh water. The fruits seem to swell up as soon as they are connected with the water, and are ready for cutting in half the time. In this way individual plants can be made to bear much more heavily, as the fruits tax the resources of their parent to only a small extent.

UMBRELLA ONCE MARK OF DERISION

The first man in England to brave public opinion by carrying an umbrella was Jonas Hanway, who died in London 132 years ago. The umbrella had been used for centuries on the continent and in England as early as the reign of Queen Anne, but its use was confined to the fair sex.

After returning from a business mission to Persia, Hanway's health became poor, and when venturing into the streets in rainy weather he protected himself by an umbrella. He was subjected to jeers and taunts, but he persisted, and soon a few other brave spirits joined him in carrying umbrellas. The greatest opposition came from the hackney coachmen and they usually led the mobs which attacked the carriers of umbrellas. They feared the umbrellas would afford sufficient protection in rain and so deter the public from hiring their vehicles.

RICH WOMEN CAN

Wives and daughters of wealthy citizens of the Wisconsin pea canning districts have entered the canneries to aid the labor situation. Recently they lined up for their pay envelopes and received a minimum wage for their ten hours' work. Forty per cent. of the peas canned in the United States are put up in Wisconsin plants. Earlier in the season pea packers expressed grave fears of a serious labor shortage and pointed to the Food Administration's request for all the peas possible.

HEIRESS DRIVES MILK WAGON

Miss Dorothy Dawes, daughter of Beman G. Dawes, millionaire president of the Ohio Cities Gas Company, has decided to leave a luxurious mansion in Columbus and "do her bit" by driving a milk wagon in Marietta, O. Miss Dawes is the first of the Columbus younger set to take up labor as a war necessity. James Devol, her employer, was crisp when reporters interviewed him. "Miss Dawes wanted the job and I hired her," said he. "There is a scarcity of men for the work. Miss Dawes will receive the regular pay."

OUR SHIPBUILDERS SET WORLD RECORD

A record eclipsing all previous shipbuilding achievements of any nation was hung up in August by the shipyards of the United States. During that month, according to a telegram from Director General Schwab, of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, to Chairman Hurley, of the Shipping Board, to-day, sixty-six ships, aggregating 340,146 deadweight tons, were delivered to the board ready for service.

In completing this vast amount of tonnage, American shipbuilders also put the shipping completed under the Shipping Board programme past the two million ton mark.

The line of submarine sinkings has already been crossed by the building of new ships by the United States alone.

PEOPLE MORE ANCIENT THAN THE CHINESE

Down in the extreme south of China, in the eastern outposts of the Himalayas, lies the little known province of Yunnan. The natives of Yunnan are exceptionally interesting, writes Roy Chapman Andrews in Asia. There are about thirty non-Chinese tribes in the province, some of which, such as the Shans, Mosos and Lolos, represent the aboriginal inhabitants of China. The Mosos formerly ruled all of northern Yunnan. At present they are scattered in remote districts where white men seldom penetrate. They are a simple, honest and delightful people, primitive and pastoral. They are looked down upon by the Chinese as barbarians.

DRIED EGGS FROM CHINA

The Tuck Wo egg produce factory, a Chinese concern, has just been completed at Yencheng, Honan, China, and the manufacture of desiccated eggs started. It is the intention of the company to prepare whole egg powder, albumen powder and yolk powder. The plant has a capacity of handling from 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of yolk in a ten-hour day.

The machinery was placed in position by an American engineer. All the plant is American excepting the dynamo and engines.

The plant is situated in one of the best egg producing regions in China. The egg cost a little more than half a cent each. It is said that there will be opportunities for the development of this industry without any attempt to increase the present egg production.

PICNIC GROUNDS OFFERED TO PERSONS WHO
WILL AID RED CROSS

A picnic of about sixty patriotic men and women of Tillamook City, Ore., recently made the trip to Sandy Lake, one of the best regions in the State for sphagnum moss. They gathered 450 sacks of the moss in a few hours.

There is a good camp ground near the moss area and produce can be had from farmers near by. It has been suggested by several of the picnic party that vacationists come and camp at this place a few days and help gather the moss for the Red Cross and at the same time enjoy their outing. There is good fishing and plenty of crabs.

FIRST QUAKERS IN AMERICA

The first Quakers to land on American soil were Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, who reached Boston in 1656 after a long voyage from England by way of the West Indian island of Barbados. The two women caused great consternation to the Puritans, and George Bishop, in an address to the Magistrates, said:

"Two women arriving in your harbor so shock ye, to the everlasting shame of you and of your established order, as if a formidable army had invaded your borders."

The Quaker sect, or Society of Friends, was founded by Fox in 1648, about eight years before the first members reached America on July 11, 1656. Later George Fox visited America. The part played by William Penn and other Quakers in the early history of Pennsylvania and New Jersey is familiar to all students of history.

CITY MAIDENS MORE SKILLED THAN COUNTRY BRED LASSES

One of the most unexpected things in relation to the employment of women on the land has been the success of the London girl. Farmers acknowledge that she tackles all kinds of farm work with more energy and enthusiasm than the young woman native of the soil, and is nearly always more skilful.

Girls who have never been near a cow before in their lives quickly become excellent milkers, and the town-bred girl is altogether astonishingly adaptable on a farm.

This may in part be due to the much-criticized elementary education in our council schools, which has proved that it can at least turn out girls possessing initiative and resource. Probably it is also partly due to the natural attraction which farm life has for the London boy or girl.

OIL FROM BONES

The business of extracting oils and fats from bones has had an extraordinary expansion of late all over Germany. Great numbers of private and of municipal plants are thus engaged, according to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, and have reaped enormous profits. While the use of the autoclave process has been increasingly extended, a more recent process in which an important part is played by benzene now threatens to oust the former, since it permits of a more complete recovery of the fats, though the final product is less agreeable in taste.

The Scheidemantel group, which uses the benzene extraction processes, is said to have distributed 300 per cent. of dividends. It now looks to a monopoly of this industry in Germany, and is strongly supported by the War Committee on Fats and Oils, which has decided to close, at a certain date, the 80 autoclave plants. The proprietors of the latter are making vigorous efforts naturally to have this order rescinded.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSES FOR NEW YORK

Although at present there seems to be no immediate threat of an aerial bombardment of New York and other important maritime cities, the decision of the War Department to provide anti-aircraft defenses is commendable. The war has been full of surprises and prudence demands that we look far ahead. Concrete emplacements for mounting anti-aircraft guns are to be constructed in various centers of New York City as a part of the general scheme for protecting the city from possible enemy air raids. Contracts have recently been awarded for this work, which is being done under the direction of Brigadier-General Bingham, U. S. A., who is in charge of the defensive work at the eastern and southern entrances of New York harbor.

FISH THAT CLIMBS TREES

There is only one kind of fish in the world that can climb a tree. It is goby, and is found in great numbers on the island of Ceram, Dutch East Indies.

Along the sea beaches of that island close to the water's edge grow huge trees. The roots start out of the trunk eight or ten feet above the ground and grow downward to meet the marshy soil in the form of flying buttresses.

The gobies, which infest the shallows alongshore, making burrows in the muddy bottom for refuge against enemies, are quite at home out of water, and on land are able to hop about with great agility, their long pectoral fins serving the purpose of arms, while their tails are operated like springs.

When the mud flats are dry these fishes may be seen skipping over them by hundreds in pursuit of tiny crustaceans left behind by the tide.

DOG SAVED MAN

John E. Blesh, the Grove street blacksmith, was attacked by a bull the other afternoon and only the assistance of a small shepherd dog prevented him from being killed or seriously injured.

Blesh had taken a cow to the home of William Shaffer, at Castanea, Pa., to dispose of the same. While in the barnyard he was attacked by a large Durham bull. He was tossed in the air by the infuriated animal, which began goring him.

The members of the family ran to his assistance, but were unable to help him. The unfortunate man grasped the animal around the neck several times in an effort to save himself, but the bull used his feet to such good advantage that he was gradually becoming weakened. About this time a small shepherd dog arrived and made a lunge at the angry bull and, getting hold of the animal's nose, compelled him to retreat.

CIRCLES THE GLOBE

John Gabos, a former Drifton boy who was seized by the Austrians and put into their army shortly after the outbreak of the war, as he was visiting his old home in Europe, although he was an American citizen at the time, is now with the United States troops at Spartansburg, S. C., having left with the last quota of drafted men from Hazleton, Pa.

After being taken a prisoner by the Russians while the latter were still a factor in the war, Gabos, who sought a chance in this way to escape from the Austrian forces, was put to work in Russian mines. When the Bolsheviks gained control he took passage across Siberia, and from thence over the Pacific, arriving home several weeks ago. He immediately registered for military service, and volunteered to go with the next quota.

When he gets to France he will have circumnavigated the globe to fight for America.

PROCESS FOR ARTIFICIAL DIAMONDS

Up to the present time the only proved source of artificial diamonds has been iron or silver intensely heated and then cooled rapidly. Diamonds appear to be formed within the metal after it has set, probably at a temperature of about 690 degrees C. In no other way than this has it been possible to have realized the combination of high temperature and high pressure under which nature appears to have converted carbon into diamonds.

A recent lecturer has suggested a variation upon this procedure. He finds it probable that if a large mass of iron, alloyed with other elements, were submitted to suitable heat treatment, and after seething but while still at a temperature leaving it permeable to gas, were subjected to carbon monoxide at a pressure of about a thousand atmospheres for a long time segregations might take place slowly within the mass, and diamonds in paying size and quantity might be commercially produced.

NEW CAVE REVEALS MARVELS OF NATURE

What promises to be the most noted cave for its scenery in this part of the country has been discovered at Elk Spring, sixty miles southwest of Pineville, in McDonald County, Mo., by J. A. Truitt of that place.

Mr. Truitt made his first discovery when he began digging in a crevice in a bluff from which stone had been removed for building purposes.

There he found a room sixty feet long. At the end of this room he discovered a small hole through which the wind was coming, so he put in a charge of dynamite and made an opening into another room above about one hundred feet long, and a third room adjoining went down on a level with the first.

Each of these rooms had a grand display of stalactites and stalagmites. Various objects are formed by nature and are interesting and instructive when explained by Mr. Truitt.

A geologist from the Chicago University visited the cave and stated that it would take 2,000,000 years to form the stalactites of this cave.

LIGHTNING BUGS IN CHORUS

Various observers testify to the fact that myriads of glow worms very occasionally indulge in synchronous flashing with very beautiful effect. It is thought by some that this phenomenon is accidental, although in this light some cases would seem incredible. John V. Purcell of Washington, D. C., records that "in the town of Cotabato, Island of Mindanao, P. I., a few years ago there were two trees about the size of apple-trees and perhaps a hundred yards apart, and every evening these were filled with fireflies which flashed in unison, first one tree lighting up and then the other. There must have been several thousand insects in each tree, yet the synchronism was so perfect that rarely or never did a single firefly flash at the wrong time."

"To the best of my recollection the illumination period lasted about two or three seconds and the dark periods perhaps twice that long. I can positively vouch for the accuracy of the foregoing, for it seemed so strange and produced so beautiful an effect that I thought it one of the most remarkable things in the Philippines, and it made a deep impression on me."

The real explanation of this sort of thing would seem to be very obscure.

FIRST HYDROGEN BALLOON

The first ascension in a balloon filled with hydrogen was made in 1783 by M. Charles and M. Robert at Paris. Henry Cavendish, about 1766, discovered the great levity of hydrogen gas, and the following year Doctor Black of Edinburgh announced that a thin bladder filled with this gas must ascend into the air. Cavallo experimented along those lines and found that a bladder was too heavy, paper not air-tight, but that soap bubbles filled with gas rose to the ceiling of the room.

The first successful balloon was made by the Montgolfier Brothers, in France, 1782. It was a fire balloon, inflated with hot air from burning paper. The Montgolfier success led M. Charles to experiment with hydrogen. Blanchard, the first professional aeronaut, with Dr. John gas, and with M. Robert he traveled thirty-one miles in a hydrogen balloon fitted with a safety-valve. In 1785 Jeffries of Boston, crossed the English Channel. Military balloons were used at the Battle of Solferino in 1859 and by the Federal arm during the Civil War near Washington in 1861.

CONDENSED BUTTERMILK A VALUABLE PRODUCT

In a recent interview with Dr. William Grellck of St. Paul, Minn., the fact was brought out that immense quantities of buttermilk have been wasted. Doctor Grellck is a member of the American Chemical Society and for years has devoted much study to the milk problem. As a result of his efforts a method has been discovered for condensing buttermilk into a semi-solid smooth surface of the consistency of ice-cream.

All the nutritive value of the buttermilk is conserved in this product, and it is especially suitable for use in bread making. From eight to ten pounds of this material when added to a barrel of flour produces a loaf of greater food value. The milk protein helps to make up the deficiency in our present-day flour substitutes. The vitamins of the butter fat help to define the structure of the bread, besides producing an agreeable milk flavor; and the sugar of milk, aside from being of great food value, when combined with the dextrin in flour, makes a fine brown crust at a comparatively low baking temperature. It saves fuel and prevents unnecessary loss of moisture.

IRISH MOSS AS A NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Consul H. Albert Johnson, Dundee, Scotland, says the Dundee Food Control Committee has recently had its attention directed to the value as a food of what is known as carrageen, or Irish moss. It is claimed that the potentiality of carrageen as a food has been fully recognized by Scotch and Irish people for generations.

Carrageen is known in various parts of Scotland under the name of "hen's dulse;" to the scientifically inclined it is known as *chondrus crispus*. It grows abundantly on rocks and stones within the littoral zone, flourishing in salt water which has a dash of fresh in it. In its natural state it has the appearance of dwarf dulse, the small flag being soft and cartilaginous, and in color it ranges from a greenish yellow to a purplish brown. When picked and sun-dried it becomes translucent and of a hornlike consistency. Among the poorer classes in Scotland it is boiled in water until it assumes the consistency of porridge and is served in a like manner with milk. It forms a jelly in about twenty to thirty times its weight in water, but is more commonly used in making various kinds of puddings. Other purposes for which it may be utilized is fining beer and in connection with calico printing. It

has 55 per cent. of mucilaginous matter, 10 per cent. albuminoids and 15 per cent. mineral, being rich in iodine and sulphur. There is little doubt that carrageen, if methodically collected and properly used, would help in augmenting the national food supply.

A REVOLVING TREE

A cross section of a great old spruce tree from Alaska tells the story of a tree which executed a spin, like any ballet dancer. This cross section shows a most peculiar spiral structure, which has caused a great deal of speculation among the various foresters throughout the country, and a very interesting explanation is advanced in *American Forestry*.

It is known that a tree growing at a slant forms on the lower side of the trunk a dense reddish wood known as "rothholz." The spiral in this case is of such sort, and it is a continuous formation, winding from the center to within half an inch from the circumference, it is surmised that it was growing in an inclined position on the edge of a glacier, where by some shifting it was caused to rotate, so that all sides of the trees were successively on the downward side. Thus, as the tree grew, and its rotation continued slowly, the "rothholz" developed into a spiral. The formation of the spiral apparently began when the tree was six years old. The tree made almost five complete revolutions, requiring eight to eighteen years of each revolution. It was eighty-three years old when cut, as may be determined by counting the annual rings, and the development of the spiral ceased about twenty-one years before, which means that the tree then must have assumed a vertical position. So our spruce tree rotated slowly for fifty-six years, forming a spiral within itself, which now, upon the worthy plant's demise, has given up its secret straying from ordinary tree ways.

OVERCOMING BARBED WIRE WITH THE WIRE-CUTTING TANK

Even the casual reader of war news must by now understand that the two greatest obstacles in the way of any offensive are the barbed-wire belts and the machine guns of the defenders. To attempt an attack while the barbed wire out front is still intact is to solicit suicide; for the attacking forces, held up by the stout belts of prickly strands, become an easy target for enemy machine gunners. So in any offensive the cutting of the barbed wires is a necessary preliminary. That is why the inventive talent of every belligerent nation has been turned in good measure on the problem of destroying barbed-wire entanglements.

A recent American suggestion is the wire-cutting tank, which is really more in the nature of large body armor. However, the armor in this case is mounted on wheels and is propelled by the crew, consisting of two men. One man propels the machine by good old foot power, while the other operates a lever which cuts the strands of barbed wire after they have become engaged with the cutting mechanism at the prow of this small landship.

The armor plate of this diminutive tank is of sufficient thickness to resist rifle and machine-gun fire, while its size affords much protection against artillery fire. In a recent test at Washington this device went through several rows of barbed wire entanglements in short order.

It would seem that the new wire-cutting tank can be employed in place of large tanks in preparing the way for a trench or surprise raid, just as the armies at present make use of heavy armor for protecting the wire cutters.

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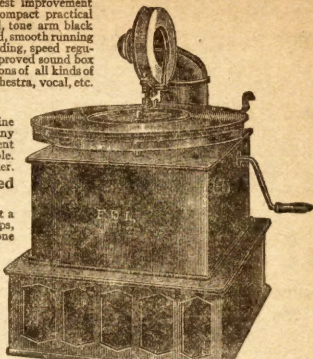
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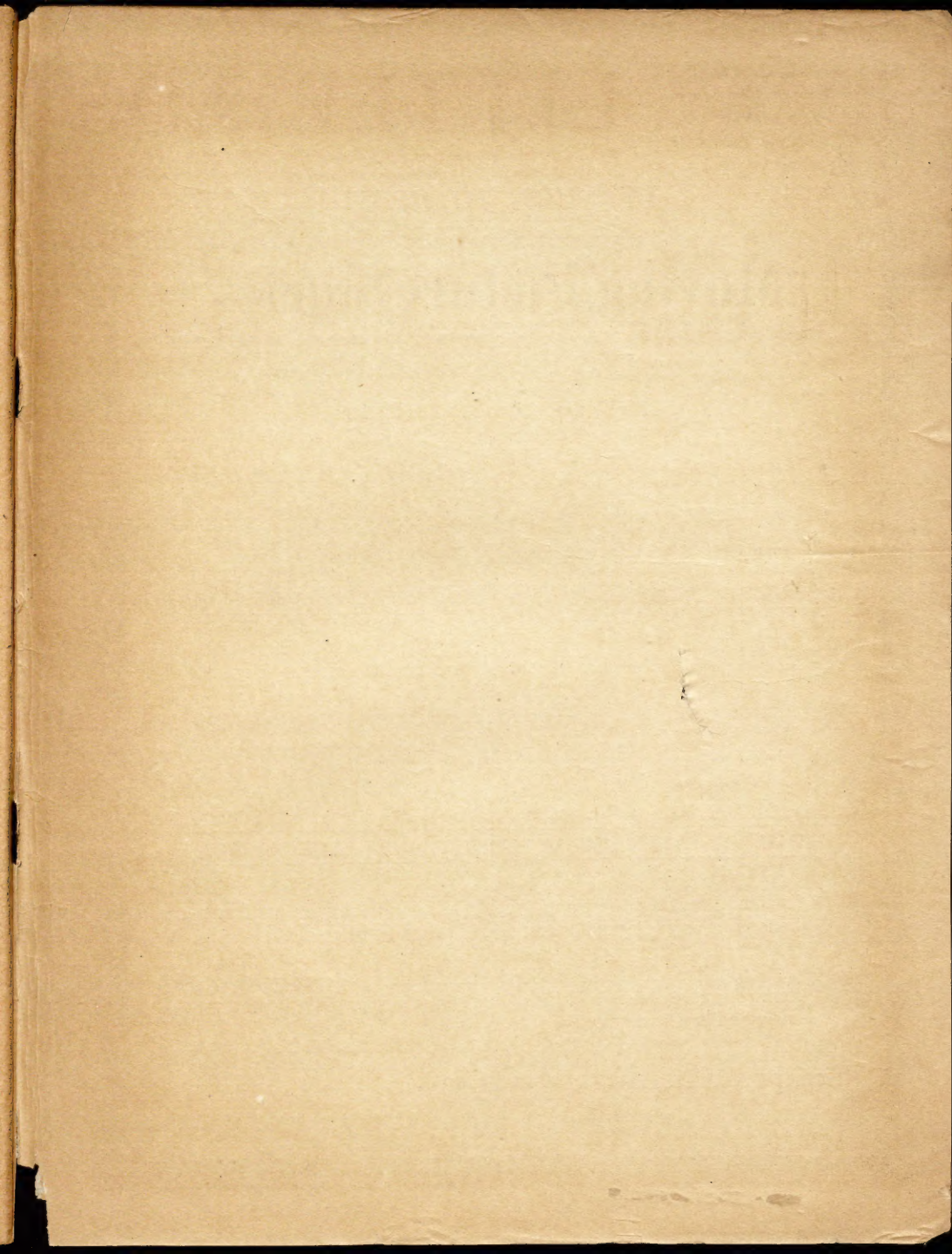
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